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GLORIOUS DEVON

GLORIOUS DEVON

GLORIOUS DEVON

BY

S. P. B. MAIS

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY
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Paddington Station, London
1928

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PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is twofold, to send you to Devon, and when you get there to help you to see it. Those who have never been to the county avoid it for two reasons. They are afraid that it is overcrowded ; they are afraid that it has been overpraised. They are wrong on both counts. There is too much of it for it ever to be overcrowded. Its scenery is too varied and our ordinary vocabulary too limited to allow of overpraise. There was a time when families moved *en bloc* from what Matthew Arnold called the " dismal and illiberal " surroundings of a suburb to the equally " dismal and illiberal " surroundings of some well-advertised seaside resort. They exchanged the crowded Strand of London for the same crowd on a smaller strand by the sea. They sat in deck chairs for a month reading the same papers that they read at home, knitting and mending the same socks, quarrelling, if they were children, over the same possessions. This they called a holiday. We have changed all that. The holiday-maker of to-day demands, and rightly demands, a change. He wants to forget the daily news. He wants to get away from crowds. He wants to be transported into a different world. Unfortunately he is dependent on the English weather, which, as Keats very aptly said, is like Lydia Languish, " very entertaining when it smiles, but cursedly subject to sympathetic moisture." What Keats forgot to add and what the advertisers of foreign resorts so often forget to add is the fact that the same applies to the Riviera, Switzerland, and the South Sea Islands.

The Englishman arriving at Nice in the rain is at first astounded as if a friend had cheated him at cards. One recalls Mr. H. M. Tomlinson's description of his first sight of Naples: "It was raining. It was cold. There was hardly any bay, and what I could see of it was as glum as a bad mistake. There were a wet quay, some house-fronts that were house-fronts, and a few cabs. I took a cab. That was better than walking to the railway station, and quicker. It is quite easy for me to describe my first sight of Naples and its bay."

To dare to suggest that it ever rains in Italy is to risk imprisonment, if not death. Mr. Tomlinson is lucky to be still alive. To dare to suggest that the sun ever shines in England is to be regarded as a fool. We have gone out of our way to assure the whole world that we live in a dense fog, and, not understanding our passion for self-depreciation, they really believe us. We must have our little jokes, but it is a pity that they should be so costly. An American regards his first sunny morning in England much as a savage regards his first eclipse.

The truth is seldom romantic, but it is, with regard to weather, worth facing. It is jolly to pretend that the girls of Devon owe their exquisite pink and white complexions, the envy of all ladies in "less happier lands," to the incessant beating of the rain on their cheeks. The sun has most to do with this, the wind something and the rain a very little. When the sun shines in other countries men and women rush to avoid it. When it shines in Devon we go out to welcome it. Our hue of bronze does not bear witness to a month spent with faces glued to the window-pane wondering whether the downpour will ever stop. The point I would make is that whereas one goes to the Continent expecting it to be always fine, we go to the West Country expecting it to be unduly wet. Each anticipation is false. There is more likelihood of sun in Torquay than there is in Genoa, but if it happens to rain there is more to do in Torquay than there is in Genoa.

When it rains a man needs amusements and amusements demand an audience. In wet weather the tourist needs a town. When it is fine he wants to be as far from towns as possible.

Devon is peculiarly well equipped in this respect. The four great centres, Plymouth, Torquay, Exeter, and Ilfracombe, by a happy accident, are evenly distributed. You can either stay in them, to stray into their exquisite and quite unexplored hinterland when it is fine, or you can stay in any of the thousand and one lonely seaside coves or moorland hamlets and dash into the neighbouring town when it is wet. The lines of communication throughout the county are uncannily well planned. You always feel isolated. You never are.

Before deciding where to take your holiday it is as well to make up your mind precisely what you want. It is like making up your mind about packing. Do you want a lot of clothes or few ? Do you want golf, all golf and nothing but golf, or do you want variety ? The wise man immediately answers " Variety."

The golf is here. From Westward Ho ! to Thurlestone there are links that are good enough to make even a Turnberry or Prestwick man forsake his native green.

Is it bathing, all bathing and nothing but bathing ? Are there finer sands than those at Woolacombe anywhere else in the British Isles ? Where ? Is there any water so deep and clear as that in the peerless cove of Blackpool ? Not this side of Tahiti, I warrant.

But golf and bathing, tennis and pierrots can be got anywhere, better perhaps in Devon than elsewhere. It is not for these things alone that the holiday-maker comes to the West.

He comes to Devon for what he cannot get anywhere else, clotted cream the colour of cowslips for breakfast, lunch, tea, and dinner, scenery as rich as the cream, contact with a glorious past history and a very pleasant type of modern people. The way, and I think the only way to see

Devon, is to go slowly in and about her, to keep moving, but to keep moving at snail's pace. The time has gone when we regarded those of our friends who stopped to inspect every church as architectural experts or devout fanatics. We are now beginning to discover in a quickly-changing England that almost our only link with the past lies in our churches. Old houses have changed hands too often, are despoiled, impoverished or transformed, but old churches bring back memories of our ancient stock. I make no more apology for turning aside into every church than I do for exploring every stream and river. If I know anything, and it is precious little, of the legends and history of my native county, it is because I have followed the fortunes of her Raleghs and Copplestones, Champernownes and Bassets, Courtenays and Grenvilles, Carys and Chichesters from monument to monument in church after church. The charm of Devon lies in her people and places. Her fairest people chose the fairest places; the fairest places have most to tell of her fairest people.

There are two obvious ways and one less obvious of seeing the county. The first is to explore her coast line, of which there are 189 miles in the south and Heaven knows how many in the north. The second is to confine oneself to the moors. Dartmoor owns to 100,000 acres of moorland, and Exmoor to perhaps a third of that amount. The third, which commends itself to me as giving the fullest variety, is to explore all her rivers which rise on the moors and on their way to the coast pass through those exquisitely-wooded combes which gave the county its name. Dyfnaint was the Celtic name for Devon, and Dyfnaint means " dark and deep valleys."

When one thinks quickly of Devon it is always of a county shaped like a patchwork quilt on which dogs have tumbled. It is all ridges and ravines, cut into tiny squares of red and yellow and green, each square bounded by an enormous hedge made of earth and stone on which forests of ferns and even trees grow, making the fields look

smaller than they really are. These great hedges served as fortresses against the great deer and other beasts that were wont to destroy the crops before the days of disafforestation. They are not to be appreciated by those who merely pass them by on the hard road and complain that they can't see the view over the top. Natives who dislike sweltering in deep green cuttings always, you will notice, walk on the tops of their hedges. As they are wider than the city walls of Caernarvon there is certainly room.

If you keep to the road you will not see Devon at all, only a succession of whitewashed thatched cottages red with fuchsia clustered round a tall grey granite church tower at three- or five-mile intervals as you bore your way through green tunnel after green tunnel. Devon hedges were never meant to be looked over. They were meant to be climbed over. The average man accustomed to towns and suburbs is not accustomed to breaking his way through brambles and bracken. The fear of the law is heavy on him. The word " trespass " which only makes a countryman laugh, is as awe-inspiring to him as the word " policeman " is to a small boy. To cure oneself of this fear the best thing to do is to buy the " Western Morning News " or " Devon and Exeter Gazette," cut out the list of meets and attend all those that are within reasonable distance. The otter will lead you up unknown streams of unimaginable loveliness, the fox and the hare, innocent of the historic importance of this and the prehistoric importance of that, will take you by routes that are marked on no map to the very heart of Devon.

Exmoor is far better known than Dartmoor, not because it is easier to know, but because nearly every able-bodied Englishman has at one time or another, on horse or on foot chased the stag across it.

I am not at the moment concerned with the ethics or zest of hunting. I am merely announcing the fact that if you really want to get to know the county as only the

farmers and the sportsmen know it, the best way, the only way, is to follow hounds. There is certainly no lack of them. You may contend that your holidays do not synchronise with the hunting season. I agree that it is a pity that more of us do not take our holidays in October when all the West is one warm russet gold and all the days are cloudless and warm without being enervating, but the otter hunters are at work all through August; there is always cubbing, and to be out of bed and on the moor before the white haze has lifted higher than the stooks of corn and the only moving thing is the blue wood-smoke curling lazily out of the cottage chimneys, is to see a Devon that the humdrum nine o'clock breakfasters cannot even guess at.

This is an age in which men can afford to be contemptuous of warlocks and leprechauns, but to walk through the dark night with only stone dancing maidens for company over a trackless boggy moor is to find some of the old wives' tales less far-fetched than they seemed in the well-lighted valley below. "Tam Pearce's ole mare" may or may not appear in the distance "gashly white," the black Whisht Hounds may not go by breathing flames, but you would not be surprised if they did. These slow-speaking Devonians know best. "Dawn'ee trubble trubble 'til trubble trubble yew, my deurr" is their answer to your flippant questions about black magic and white witches. The wise man appeases the pixies lest he should be "Pixy-led," realising that prevention is better than cure. There is no fire without smoke. Tread warily among these childish beliefs. At the lowest they are vastly entertaining and contribute generously to that "change" which you have come to get. It is reassuring to one's own superiority to listen to the credulous and superstitious, and when the legends and stories are couched in this soft Devon "burr," a language which has retained the most effective Anglo-Saxon imagery and metaphor and the most musical intonation, you will find ordinary

conversation by contrast a little colourless and tepid, and modern stories banal.

Get some old wife of Tavistock to tell you again the story of the lovely Elfrida, the fame of whose beauty so wrought upon the imagination of King Edgar that he sent his faithful Ethelwold to woo her for him. Her beauty was too much for Ethelwold, who reported that she was ill-favoured, and then won her for himself. All went well until the King in his kindness condescended to pay the young couple a visit. Ethelwold, harping to Elfrida on the Don Juan-like qualities of his overlord, implored her to try to look ugly on this single occasion. Somewhat naturally she took pains to look her best. The effect on Edgar was immediate. He asked Ethelwold to accompany him hunting, by sad misadventure mistook him for a stag, put an arrow through him, and Elfrida became Edgar's queen and the mother of his son Ethelred the Unready.

Get some old fisherman of Beer to recount to you the exploits of Jack Rattenbury, the King of the Smugglers, or some Bickleigh worthy to give you the life history of that famous Carew who became King of the Gipsies. Mention the name of Coppinger in any cottage between Hartland and Morwenstow, and you will start a host of stories that will make melodrama seem very tame. It is easy to skim over the surface of Devon and return disappointed.

The West Country, like a bashful maiden, has a habit of refusing to reveal her beauty to those who are peremptory or high-handed. She has to be wooed to be won, won to be understood, understood to be loved. Understanding does not come in a day, and I do not flatter myself that it will come with the aid of this little book alone. This may show the way to some, remind others of what perhaps they were in danger of forgetting, and even prove a stumbling-block to those who disapprove of my method. I stand tongue-tied before the infinite variety

of my county, and often have to open a gateway into a valley, and leave you, after announcing its name, to supply your own adjectives. The mouth of the Yealm, the upper reaches of the Dart, the waterfall at Speke's Mill, the Braunton Burrows, the Teign at Fingle, Grimspound, Blackpool Cove, Watcombe Glen, all leave me speechless with delight. I find myself rolling their names over my tongue as one turns over the precious pages of a First Folio of Shakespeare. At one moment it is the rich terra-cotta of the fields, at another the different redness of the cliffs, at a third the billowy green of the deep combes. As we begin to enumerate its charms we wonder why anyone who is master of his time comes to live anywhere else or how visitors ever manage to tear themselves away from it.

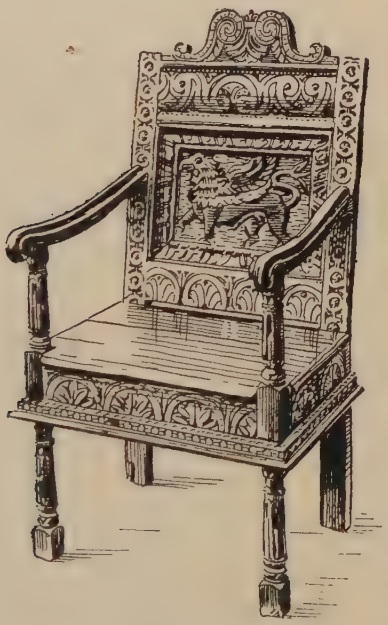
Master Westcote, three hundred years ago, found his native county worthy of a book, but it took a long time for the county to become known. Eighty years ago two boatmen tried without success to make a living by rowing visitors up the Dart. In an average August nowadays each of the paddle steamers can count on 20,000 passengers during the month.

Devon is emphatically a county that likes to be visited. It is not without significance that the Danes should so often have spilt blood in endeavouring to obtain a footing on its delectable shores. Rich, like the island of Tenedos, in all its resources, it appeals alike to the lover of wild birds and the collector of rare flowers, the antiquarian and the archæologist, the sportsman and the artist, and perhaps most of all to the tired city worker, who, having but twenty-one or thirty days in all the year to refresh himself, searches for a place in which the sun shines brightest, the colours are most glowing, the natives most hospitable, the food rich and appetising, and Nature is in her most peacock-like mood. Such a man wants to insure against disappointment. His best insurance is to take a ticket to Exeter. Having done that let him search the county until he comes to a place where he sees before him

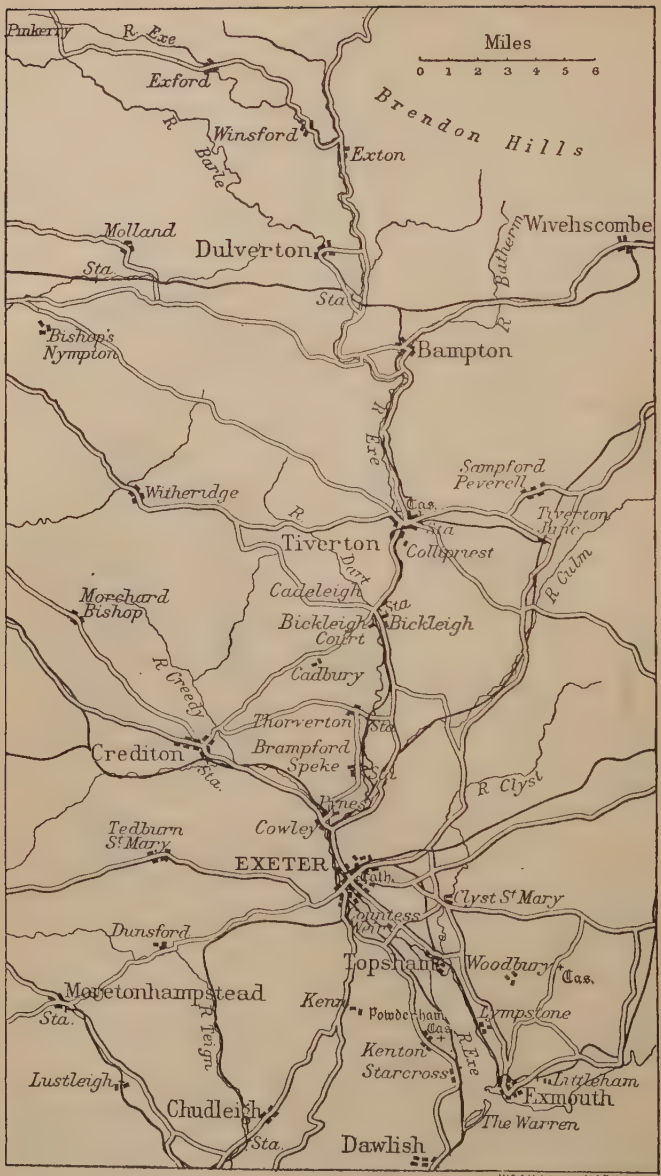
a white ribbon of hedgeless road winding across a trackless moor all yellow with broom and purple with heather accompanied by a peat-stream the colour of a cairngorm musically tumbling over titanic boulders of polished granite, both disappearing in the dim distance down into a deep combe of feathery green trees. That shall serve as introduction to the Devon that I would have all men see.

S. P. B. M.

The Hall,
Southwick,
Sussex.



FORDE HOUSE, NEWTON ABBOT, CHAIR USED BY WILLIAM, PRINCE OF ORANGE, AT FIRST COUNCIL AFTER LANDING AT BRIXHAM, 1688



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DEVON

CHAPTER I

EXETER AND THE EXE VALLEY

(1) The City

THERE are cities to which a man gives his heart as he gives it to a person, and from that moment no matter what mood the city or the person may be in the allegiance remains. Let the east wind bite never so sharply, the west wind blow never so boisterously, Princes Street, Edinburgh, remains for nearly all those who know it as hauntingly beautiful as a sonnet of Wordsworth or a Beethoven sonata. In spite of the fact that I have been in barracks there, Exeter remains for me the most lovable of all English cities. If I had been at school there or even imprisoned there, I should, I believe, still love it. To be condemned to Princetown would add ten years to my sentence. To be condemned to Exeter would take ten years off it. The narrow High Street is invariably so congested that no motorist ever sees more than the fact that many of its shops are ornately carved and obviously Tudor. To appreciate Exeter you have to stop and loiter, not for one day, but for weeks, and as a centre from which to explore the whole county it has no rival. At every step you take you unravel another thread of its great history.

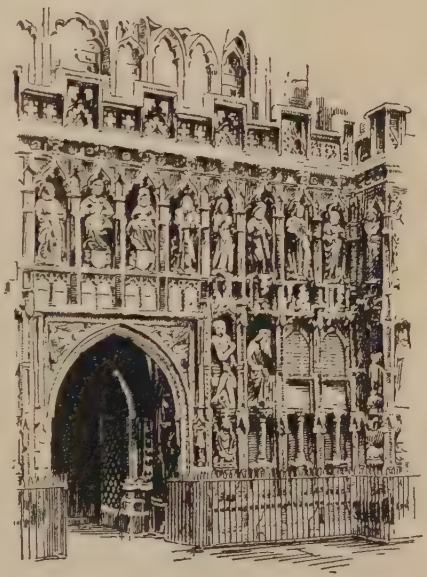
"In Exeter," says Arthur Norway, "all the history of the west is bound up—its love of liberty, its independence, its passionate resistance to foreign conquerors, its devotion to lost causes, its loyalty to the throne, its pride, its trade, its maritime adventure, all these many strands are twined together in that bond which links west countrymen to Exeter."

It was known by the British as Caerwisc, by the Romans as Isca Damnoniorum, and by the Saxons as Exanceaster. The Danes on two occasions in Alfred's reign, and twice in Ethelred's reign attacked the city, the fourth time successfully. Athelstan built the great red castle of Rougemont which William the Conqueror, after besieging the city for eighteen days, first laid low and then rebuilt. In 1497 Perkin Warbeck besieged it and twice forced his way in. As a token of recognition for its services in this affair, Henry VII gave his sword and the cap of maintenance to the city. A more interesting event was the Devon Rebellion of 1549, which began as the result of the command that the English Book of Common Prayer should be used on and after Whit Sunday. The parishioners of Sampford Courtenay, disliking this departure from their usual custom, insisted on their priest reading the Mass on Whit Monday in Latin. The disaffection spread. A franklin called William Hellions, who went to Sampford to try to argue with the peasants, was torn in pieces. Other villagers joined them and they marched to Crediton where they established themselves in some thatched barns until they were burnt out. Another band at Clyst St. Mary were more successful. They captured wagons with the Royal treasure, and the whole village had to be set on fire before they were defeated and butchered. The vicar of St. Thomas', Exeter, who was with them was hanged in his vestments on his own church tower and his body left dangling for four years.

The golden age of Exeter was the golden age of England. What Elizabeth's age would have been like without her

men of Devon it is hard to imagine. Her statement that they were "all born courtiers with a becoming confidence" is fully borne out by glancing at a list of her sea-captains, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Ralegh, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, the Hawkins, and the Burroughs.

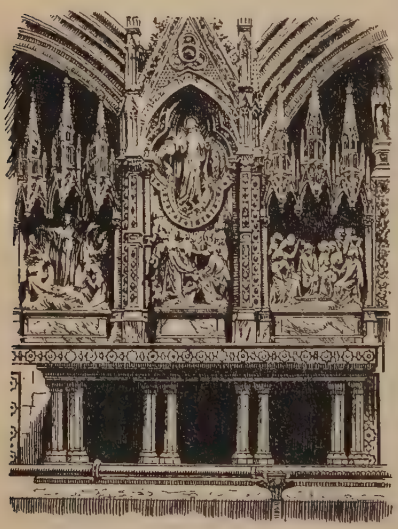
During the Civil War, Prince Maurice captured the city and the Queen took up her headquarters in Bedford House, where she gave birth to the ill-starred Princess Henrietta Maria, whose portrait, by Lely, hangs in the Guildhall opposite to that of General Monk, who was also born in Devon. Jeffreys held his Bloody Assizes here, and William of Orange met with a very cold reception, in marked contrast to his welcome on landing at Brixham. The Dean refused to meet him, and the Canons absented themselves from his Te Deum service. The popularity of the Jacobite cause in Devon can be seen from the number of Scotch firs planted about this time. "Semper Fidelis," the motto of the city, is no less than truth. The citizens have always disliked change whether of Prayer Books or dynasties. James Butler, Duke of Ormond, failed to rouse them in 1714 against the Hanoverian Succession, but forty years later no Exeter man accepted an invitation to a ball celebrating the King's birthday.



EXETER CATHEDRAL—WEST PORCH

The first place which all visitors immediately make for

is, of course, the Cathedral with its superb Norman towers and richly carved western front. It was in 932 that Athelstan rebuilt the minster and monastery, and about 1050 that Leofric, chaplain to Edward the Confessor, desired the Pope to consider the transference of the Bishopric of Crediton to Exeter. The minster of SS. Mary and Peter became the Cathedral. William the Conqueror's nephew, Warelwast, in 1112 began the building of a second cathedral, and the present building is the third, designed by Bishop Quivil, who died in 1291. It is built of Beer stone, which is very white and easily chiselled when new, but turns black with age and crumbles. Much damage has been done to the carved saints owing to the fact that the superstition has long been rife that powdered stone stolen from sacred images has the power to cure diseases. In the north tower there is an ancient astronomical clock, presumably the oldest in the world, as it dates back to 1317. The south tower contains thirteen of the Cathedral bells, which are very heavy and extremely rich in tone. Curfew is tolled every night at eight o'clock on Great Peter which weighs 125 cwt. The chime which is rung for services has been rung in the same order for 350 years. The nave is one of exceptional beauty, the vaulting giving the impression of a succession of a thousand petrified ripples. There are seven pillars and arches on each side, with corbels



EXETER CATHEDRAL—HIGH ALTAR AND REREDOS

Exeter Cathedral

Exeter Cathedral—The Nave

in between, supporting columns of Purbeck marble, from which spring the ribs of the vaulting. There is no intervening tower to interrupt the full glory of this magnificent stone roof, but the huge organ set above the richly carved stone minstrels' gallery spoils, in the eyes of some, the full effect. There is a plaque to R. D. Blackmore, author of "Lorna Doone," under

MOL'S COFFEE HOUSE AND ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH

the west window (which is remarkable for its fourteenth-century tracery), Captain Scott's sledge flag projects from the south wall, and there are memorials to men of Devon who have fallen in many wars. The Bishop's Throne, carved in the fifteenth century, is singularly graceful, and is said to owe its continued preservation to the fact that it was put together without a nail and hence was taken to pieces quickly in the Civil War and hidden before the Roundheads could "slight" it. It cost £12 to make and rises to a height of 52 feet. There are tombs of Raleghs, Chichesters, de Bohuns, Carews,

Gilberts, and of course those Bishops Leofric, Quivil, and the rest who devoted themselves to the building and beautifying of the Cathedral. The chantry of Bishop Oldham and the tomb of Bishop Bronescombe do much to lend colour to a cathedral whose uniform note of grey needs a little relief.

The Close and neighbourhood are worth exploring in detail. In the Clarence Hotel there are more objects of interest than you will find in many museums; almost next door is St. Martin's red sandstone church and Mol's Coffee House, where there is an upper room shaped like a ship's state-cabin of the Tudor period, with 230 crooked panes of glass in its galleon-like window, surrounded by panels above which are the coats of arms of forty-six of the most eminent Devonians of the Elizabethan era. College Hall in South Street contains walls covered with fine linen-fold panelling and rarely carved chairs. Of the thirty-two Exeter churches St. Pancras claims to occupy the site of a Roman church, St. Mary Arches is filled with rounded Norman pillars and contains the graves of countless mayors and aldermen, and St. Mary Steps possesses a sixteenth-century clock above which is a figure of Henry VIII seated between two yeomen each bearing a partisan and hammer. The group is known as "The Miller and his Men," the miller being a certain Matthew whose punctuality was so remarkable that his neighbours all regulated their clocks by him. It is particularly worth while paying a visit to St. Mary Arches, because it is in a poor district, and the medieval atmosphere is caught at once as one wanders up these steep cobbled lanes with overhanging gabled tenements. The real Exeter lies in Stepcote Hill and Smythen Street, which should be explored by night as well as by day.

General Gordon and Florence Nightingale are both commemorated in St. Thomas without the Walls, there is a monument in St. Sidwell's to Hugh Groves who, with John Penruddocke and Sir Joseph Wagstaffe, got up an

abortive rebellion in 1655 against the Commonwealth, and, following a defeat at South Molton, was decapitated at Exeter. It seems fitting that the monument should be placed here, for St. Sidwell was a British princess who had her head cut off with a scythe by her stepmother while she was praying beside a well.

One of the most exquisite pieces of architecture is to be found in St. Nicholas' Priory in the Mint, once the chief monastic house in the city. At the Dissolution there was

ST. MARY'S CHURCH AND STEPS

a spirited attempt on the part both of men and women to prevent its spoliation. There is a Norman crypt, a fine thirteenth-century kitchen of red conglomerate stone, and an abbot's cell with the floor worn down where the abbot used to pace up and down by the window reading his breviary. All the centuries have left their architectural mark in the priory. There are moulded ceilings of the sixteenth century, a guest-hall, and Prior's Solar of the fifteenth. It is little wonder that Joan Reve, Elizabeth Glandfield, Agnes Collaton, Alys Miller, and Joan Reede

should have taken up spikes, shovels, and stones to protect its manifold beauties with such determination that "neither with fair words nor with foul" could John Blackealler, the alderman, prevail against them.

More famous even than St. Nicholas' Priory is the Guildhall, with its exquisite Elizabethan portico projecting over the footpath in the main street. Its interior is heavily panelled and has a frieze containing the coats of arms of Exeter's most notable worthies. Here are kept Lely portraits, the cap of maintenance, Edward IV's sword, still wrapped in the crape put on it to commemorate the execution of Charles I, and the City Regalia.

One of the most ornate ceilings in the city is in Bobby's showrooms, while Ross's the tailor and the "Western Morning News" occupy shops and offices that contain richly-carved oak of the Tudor period.

Rougemont Castle, the name of which caused Richard III to quake in his shoes, is composed of red sandstone; its gateway has been restored and ramparts repaired, but it is no more than a ruin. The city walls can be traced sporadically, in Bartholomew Street best of all, for here they still act as a rampart from which to look down on the river. It is good to wander without specific object in

EXETER—GUILDHALL

Exeter Cathedral—The Choir

Exeter Cathedral—Organ and Choir Screen

Exeter and take any turning that commends itself, for it is so rich in historical buildings that you are certain to discover for yourself something as good as Bampfylde House with its perfect courtyard, once Lord Poltimore's house, now an office, the Norman House, and Tucker's Hall. The High Street itself is inexhaustibly entertaining,

ROUGEMONT CASTLE

and when one remembers that it was originally the Roman Ickneild Way it is hard not to set one's imagination coursing back along the centuries, stripping the city of one after another of its palimpsests until one again sees Caerwisc as it was when the Romans found it, a knoll steeply falling away on every side save one.

Exeter is much more than a city of the past. It is the meeting-place of all Devonians. Its streets are thronged with red-faced men returned from the ends of the earth to establish contact once again with old friends. It hums with life. The days have gone when the pack mules came through Exeter's streets laden with wool, and sea captains with their boisterous roysterers swaggered

through on their way to Plymouth, but it is not, as so many cathedral cities are, just the haunt of clergy. It is busy, prosperous, and intensely alive and yet withal completely beautiful.

(2) Up the Exe

Exeter is the best of all centres from which to explore the county, but as it lies on the Exe one's first inclination will be to follow the track of its river. One of the least-known and most profitable excursions is to follow it to its source. How quick is the transformation from the thronged and noisy streets to the isolation and quietude of the river bank. Exeter on this side, at any rate, has no suburbs. The way to Cowley Bridge is by way of rich meadows and a wide water. Here the silence is only broken by the rushing of the river over the weir where the Creedy from Crediton runs into the Exe, and we turn through the wood on our right, and look across to the great red house of Pynes, the home of the Stafford-Northcotes, Earls of Iddesleigh.

From this point we are in the real Devon of which so few visitors seem to know anything, the country of small rich fields, with massive hedges, innumerable villages of white thatched cottages clustering round a square-towered church, wooded knolls, and everywhere birds and flowers in great profusion. The Exe winds under railway and road, now on one's right, now on one's left, through flat fields filled with browsing cattle, and we pass first through Brampford Speke, famous for the election of a rector about eighty years ago who denied the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, thereby causing a great disaffection. There is an earthwork at Cadbury, near Thorverton, where Roman relics have been found, but the first place really to give us pause is Cadeleigh or Bickleigh Bridge, which is

River Exe above Tiverton

Tiverton

a broad grey ivy-covered bridge of great age. Cadeleigh Church has a monument to Sir Simon Leach, son of a Crediton blacksmith, who was Sheriff of Devon and married a Turbeville. His grandson married Sir Bevil Grenville's daughter, and their son married a Clifford of Chudleigh. Bickleigh Court was the home of the Courtenays, and then of the Carews, and in the churchyard lies the body of that famous King of the Gipsies, Bampfylde Moore Carew, son of the rector, who was born in 1690 and died after as varied a life as even a Devonian could wish, in 1758. He began by making other people's dogs follow him, and then himself followed the gipsies. Learning that his parents were grieving for him the truant returned home and received a true prodigal's welcome, only to return to the beggars who acclaimed him as their King, probably because of his genius for disguise. He was equally convincing as a shipwrecked sailor and a priest who had given up his living for conscience' sake. He travelled all over Europe begging lightheartedly, cheating the world with infinite good humour. It was obviously entirely out of a love of mischief that he elected to live as he did, as we can easily see from that episode in which he pretended to be a smuggler turned King's Evidence with the result that he sent the Excisemen

TIVERTON CASTLE
THE GATE-HOUSE AND SOUTH FRONT

on a wild goose chase searching for contraband in Squire Cary's house at Torre Abbey, and at Squire Mallock's at Cockington. He was transported to America, and escaped to the Indians wearing an iron collar round his neck. Working his way back to England he was press-ganged for the navy, transported for the second time, and once more got away. To stand on the five-arched bridge and look over the river at the trim ivy-clad manor house where the boy was brought up is to wonder at the queer trait that has tempted so many Devon men away from such homes of sheer loveliness. Perhaps too much perfection cloys.

There is a small river Dart just here, the valley of which is quite unknown; the Exe valley now enters narrower country with steep hills on either side, and passes Collipriest before reaching Tiverton, one of the most ancient of Devon towns. It is mentioned in Alfred the Great's will under the name of Tuyford. In the Domesday Book it appears as a royal manor with two mills. It has always been associated with the wool trade. In the reign of George III it had fifty-six fulling mills. By 1820, owing to Yorkshire's competition, it was dead, so far as Tiverton kersey was concerned. With commendable industry and strategy it turned its attention to lace, which still occupies it very profitably. Most people know Tiverton by reason of its great Public School, Blundell's, somewhat easily the best school in the far west of England. It was founded by Peter Blundell, himself a cloth factor who rose from nothing to be able to give away during his lifetime what to-day would be scarcely less than a million of money. Locally only less famous, is John Greneway, another cloth merchant, who died in 1529 and founded the almshouses and endowed the Greneway Chapel which is part of St. Peter's, the finest church in Devon. Over the decorated south porch runs the legend, "In tyme and space, God send grace—John Greneway—to pray for me that the gate begune." There are anchors, woolpacks, galleons, galleasses, and rowing galleys elaborately sculptured in stone over the

Bampton

River Exe at Countess Weir

exterior, which has only one peer in the West of England, that of the parish church of Launceston. The interior is noble and most impressive, and proves how much the rich clothiers cared for their mother church. Bampfylde Moore Carew, R. D. Blackmore, Parson Jack Russell of Swimbridge, and Archbishop Temple were all educated at the school where John Wesley's elder brother, Samuel, was once headmaster. The Courtenays once lived in Tiverton Castle. The town was burnt down in 1612, 1661, 1731, and 1794.

Bampton, the next village, is on a tributary called the Batherm, and is famous for its pony fair and the fact that in 614 the Britons were defeated here by Cynegils, the first Christian King of the West Saxons. There is, however, another Bampton near Oxford which is perhaps a likelier place for this battle. The church contains monuments to the great family of Bourchier, Earls of Bath. A Carmelite friar, born here, was the first to lecture on Aristotle in Cambridge. He died in 1391.

TIVERTON—ST. PETER'S CHURCH

We have really no right to trace the river further, for the rest of its course lies in Somerset, but no man having started on this journey is likely to be put off by a county boundary, so we shall be

well advised to trespass, and leaving Dulverton (which is on the Barle) on our left we enter the wooded valley of the Exe in the area where at any moment we may hear stags crash out of covert and see them jump across the road. At Exton we turn left off the Minehead road and find ourselves soon in Winsford, the proud possessor of seven bridges, nestling under high hills, and then in Exford, where are the kennels of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds. We are now penetrating the very heart of Exmoor and are soon above the thousand-feet level looking over a wild expanse of treeless uplands, different from Dartmoor in that there are no peaks or tors, and that there stretches away to the north the blue waters of the Bristol Channel with the high mountains of South Wales behind. The actual source of the Exe is on Hoar Oak Hill near

WINSFORD

Pinkery Pond, which is to Exmoor what Cranmere is to Dartmoor, a wild area of bog and peat. Pinkery is, however, a real tarn of pitch black and about a mile in circumference. It is easier to reach than Cranmere but as well repays a visit. It is good to have penetrated to the fountain-head of a river that cuts through the very heart of a county, rising in the extreme north to fall into the sea on the extreme south after a voyage of seventy miles,

every one of which passes some object of beauty and interest, no part of which is anything but beautiful.

(3) Down the Exe

Below Exeter the Exe runs a normal course for four miles, but as soon as it is joined by the Clyst it suddenly widens to a mile across. Before, however, we reach that water we come to Countess Weir.

Isabella de Fortibus, Countess of Devon, annoyed with the citizens of Exeter, closed in 1282 the then navigable Exe by erecting a weir, which meant that Topsham got all the sea-trade which formerly belonged to Exeter. It was not until Elizabeth's reign that Exeter constructed a canal to a point below the weir to re-establish connexion. On the western bank Powderham Castle is the first place to attract attention, the home for generations of the Courtenays, Earls of Devon, who got their name from a certain ' William wi' the short Nose," who fought against the Saracens and was accounted a saint. The park is filled with bracken and deer. The house dates from Richard II's reign. There are two old churches here, one at Kenn, the other at Kenton, both possessing remarkable screens.

Starcross, a little to the south, is a tiny place marked with fir trees where we cross to Exmouth after rambling over the waste sand-dunes of Dawlish Warren, famous for its golf course and bathing.

Exmouth itself stands on the eastern mouth of the river, and is sheltered by Woodbury Hill from both the north-east and south-east winds. Its long stretch of hard sands make it a very popular bathing-place, especially for Exeter people who in their wisdom treat it as Londoners treat Brighton. It is an essentially lively seaside resort with splendid facilities for fishing.

Lady Nelson is buried at Littleham, and the oak trees at

Point-in-View almshouses are not to be cut down except for the purpose of building ships to take the Jews back to Palestine.

Exeter is twelve miles away, reached by rail which passes through Lympstone, a most attractive old-world fishing village.

It is worth going inland a little here to climb Woodbury Castle, a series of earthworks from which all South and East Devon may be seen. Topsham is the next place of interest, and it is hard as one wanders by its deserted quay or along its one straggling street to remember that it was once the port of Exeter owing to the Countess Isabella's caprice. There are Chantrey monuments in the church. The whole estuary is of interest whatever the state of the tide, and it is worth making this circular tour of twenty odd miles many times and in both directions to get every aspect of the mouth of one of the most picturesque of Devon's rivers.

TOPSHAM

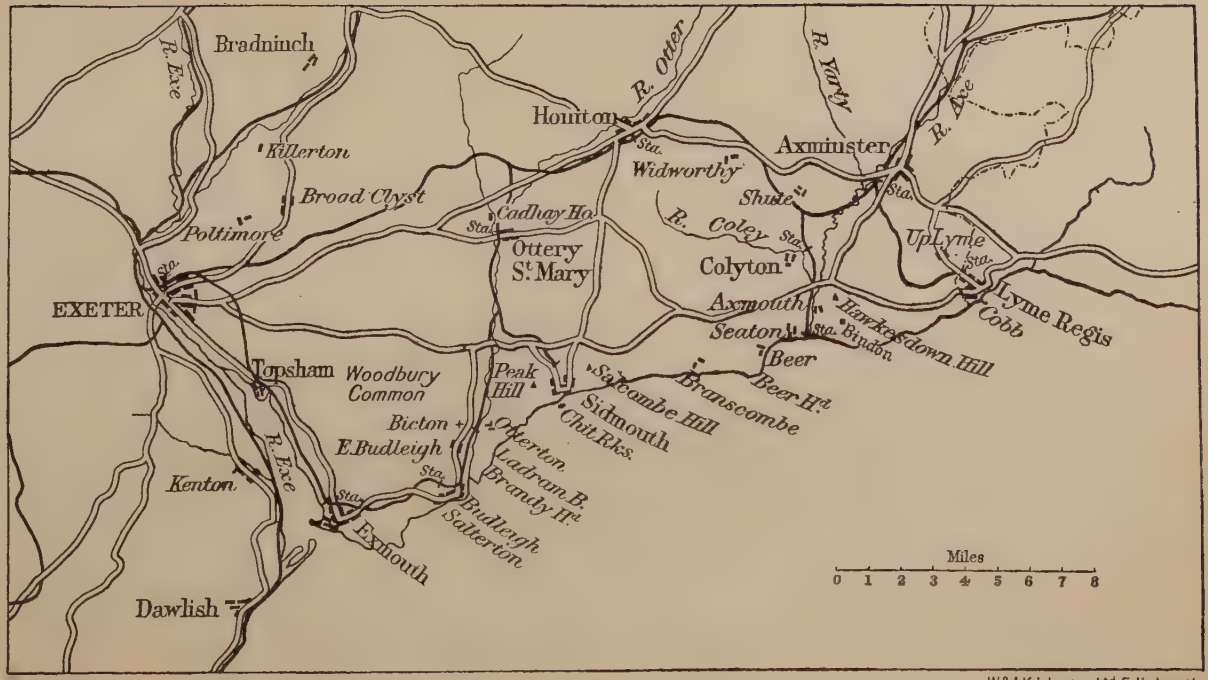
Exmouth Harbour

Exmouth Promenade

CHAPTER II

EAST DEVON

AN excellent circular tour from Exeter is one which strikes a line due east to Axminster, then south to the borders of Lyme Regis, and home along the white-cliffed coast to Exmouth. The first stopping-place of interest is Broadclyst, which was burnt by the Danes in 1001. Here, at Killerton, is the country home of the famous family of Dyke Acland, and near by, at Poltimore, are the wooded parks of the Bampfyldes. A little south lies Ottery St. Mary, one of Devon's glories. The church vies with Tiverton for supremacy and possesses transeptal towers like those at Exeter. It is a thirteenth-century building with a weathercock as old as the oldest stone in it which whistles in a strong wind. Coleridge, whose father was vicar and headmaster of the Grammar School, was born here, and the family of Lord Coleridge still lives here. A Tudor house called Cadhay is worth seeing for its perfect quadrangle, with an entrance in the centre of each side with figures over them of Henry VIII and his three children. The village lies on the river Otter, which only runs a course of fourteen miles, but in that distance has managed to secure fame as one of the finest of all angling streams in England. The town next on its banks northwards is Honiton, famous for its lace and its fine broad street running along the slope of Dumpdon Hill. The church has a beautiful screen and contains the tomb of Thomas Marwood, who was lucky enough to cure the Earl of Essex of some malign malady and earn the lasting



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Ottery St. Mary Church

Lyme Regis

gratitude of Elizabeth. He lived to the good age of 105.

On the way across the valley to Axminster we pass first Widworthy, where Prouzes, Chichesters, and Marwoods once flourished, and Shute, where the ivy-clad gatehouse and one wing of the old Tudor mansion of the Poles still stands. There is a park full of deer, and in the church a monument to one of the family who was Master of the Household to Queen Anne. Axminster lies on the Axe, just above its junction with the Yarty. It is a very old and lovely town on the side of a wooded hill. There was a minster here in 755, and Athelstan founded a college here to commemorate that great battle of Brunanbergh, fought here in 937, in which five kings and seven earls were killed. The Danes under Anlaf, together with the Picts and Scots under Constantine their king, attacked England from the south. Anlaf disguised himself as a minstrel to find out the strength and disposition of the English forces and was suspected because he buried the money given him, but not arrested. Athelstan moved his quarters, which were then occupied by the Bishop of Sherborne, who, with his men of Dorset, was thereupon attacked and defeated. Athelstan then re-entered the field and, with the help of Odo, Bishop of Salisbury, who gave him his sword, drove the Danes back to their ships. Odo, who was a Dane, was made Archbishop of Canterbury for this action and the whole of Wessex fell into the hands of Athelstan. With such a stirring beginning for her history it is not surprising to find Axminster well in the thick of it during the Civil War. While Lyme Regis was putting up its superb defence, the Royalists occupied Axminster, and in one of the forays it was burnt. It is now famous for carpets, which have not, however, been made here for a hundred years.

The country as we turn south-east to Up Lyme, which is just in Devon, and to Lyme Regis, which is just in Dorset, is particularly beautiful. There are furze-clad commons,

deep lanes, thick woods, and rich fields all the way, and Lyme Regis is itself so inviting that every one will trespass across the border to have a look at its steep streets, sunken sea wall, and landslip. Lyme is known mainly for Jane Austen's association with it and her description of the cobb or stone pier which curls like a crook, but the town also played a fine part in the Civil War. For two months twenty-five "lecturers" exhorted the townspeople under Blake to withstand Prince Maurice and his 4000 men, who kept the town riddled with cannon balls with some ease as will readily be understood by anyone who stands on the hill above it, and in 1685 (only forty-one years later), when the Duke of Monmouth landed, these sturdy warriors immediately lent him their aid with the same sublime faith, only on this occasion to rue it. One of Lyme's worthies less well known "had an admirable tact in forcing a seal, yet so invisibly that it still appeared a virgin to the exactest beholder," a useful trait in days when reading other peoples' letters led to high office in the State.

We now set our faces westward, away from the Chesil Beach, to the richer glories of Devon, and at once as we take the coast-line for Axmouth we find ourselves in a land made beautiful by landslips. Cracks and fissures in the cliffs and fields resulted about ninety years ago in three-quarters of a mile of land, some eighty yards wide, sinking in a moment about a couple of hundred feet, leaving a vast chasm of wreckage that now, covered with trees and ferns and flowers, is both beautiful and awe-inspiring. It is with a certain sense of relief even now that we climb out of this uneven gorge and look down on the silted-up valley of the Axe, and across it to Seaton. Axmouth has a Norman church, an interesting manor-house called Bindon, the home of the Erles, and lies under the hill of Hawksdown, an ancient earthwork. With a commendable sense of public spirit the local farmers endeavoured to dig out a path for the sea during the last century, but one flood was enough to destroy all their

Seaton

Budleigh Salterton

labours, and there is little likelihood of Axmouth or Seaton regaining the importance it held in 1347 when it contributed two ships to the fleet which set sail for Calais. The remains of a Roman villa have been found at Seaton which is now a pebble-ridge bounded by a white chalk cliff on one side, and a red sandstone cliff on the other.

There is a concrete bridge over the Axe. The bathing from the sandy beach below the pebble-ridge is excellent, and the walks in the glens and chines are charming.

It is well worth while walking up the beautiful valley of the Coley to Colyton, where there are fine effigies of Sir John and Lady Elizabeth Pole, a mausoleum of the Yonge family, one of whom was Secretary for War and lost two fortunes trying to keep his seat in Parliament. Here also is the tomb of "Little Chokebone," granddaughter of Edward IV, who was choked by a fishbone in 1512.

Just over the white cliff to the west of Seaton lies Beer, that old-world cove once famous for Jack Rattenbury and his band of smugglers, now the favoured holiday-ground of thousands of tourists. It possesses an endless succession of caverns, old quarries, and walks along the cliffs, and the fishermen still wear that un-English look that is said to be due to a Spanish settlement here in the seventeenth century. We leave Beer Cove with reluctance and walk four hundred feet above the sea over the gorse-covered down of Beer Head, the last chalk cliff we shall pass in the West Country, to Branscombe, a village nestling in a combe, supposed to have got its name from St. Brendon, the voyager. The church, which is cruciform and very old, contains a monument to Joan Tregarthen and her two husbands, John Kelleway and John Wadham. One of her sons was the founder, in 1610, of Wadham College, Oxford. From Beer we follow the uneven cliffs to Sidmouth, which is a prosperous seaside resort sheltered by trees on the north, Salcombe Hill on the east, and Peak Hill on the west. There are many

barrows and camps in the neighbourhood to mark the Neolithic settlements. The manor belonged at one time to Gytha, the mother of Harold, and William the Conqueror gave it to the monks of Mont St. Michel as a thank-offering for his conquest of England. As a holiday resort it owes its fame to Queen Victoria's visit in childhood to Glen Royal. This was the home of Mrs. Partington, who tried to keep out the ocean with a mop, and afforded Sydney Smith his apt illustration when discussing the House of Lords' attitude to the Reform Bill. West of Sidmouth lies Peak Hill, from which one looks over the red cliff to the reef of Chit Rocks and then passes on through High Peak Wood to Ladram Bay, which is one of the most famous beauty spots of Devon. Ladram is not unlike Blackpool in minuteness. There is a tiny narrow path hollowed out of the sandstone leading down to the beach, and out at sea stand detached red-arched blocks of cliff. There are high headlands shutting the cove in on each side, with illuminating names, like Brandy Head, to show what this quiet beach was used for in the long ago. We are now within a mile or two of the mouth of the Otter, with Budleigh Salterton on its western bank, a quiet jolly seaside place set in a country that is

EAST BUDLEIGH—DIRECTION POST AND MILESTONE

both beautiful in its coast-line and rich in interest in its interior. Just up the river lies East Budleigh, known to every one as the birthplace of Sir Walter Ralegh. The farmhouse, Hayes Barton, has a thatched roof and three gables. The church is thirteenth century and there are two pews bearing the Ralegh arms, one of which has been defaced. The pew-ends are quaintly carved with figures of Indians and ships. One is of a woman eating a

EAST BUDLEIGH CHURCH—SHOWING RALEGH'S ARMS ON PEW ENDS

banana. The old vicarage has secret passages and hiding-places, and the names of two smuggling parsons, "Mat. Mundy and Amb. Stapleton," are cut on the parlour window. It was in this parish that on All Saints' Day the children would "holloa for biscuits" in the churchyard. Just across the water is Otterton, a quiet village of cob cottages, an ancient priory, and an old mill. They still make Honiton lace here. The way back to Exeter lies through Bicton Park, where there are fine trees, and over the ridge of Woodbury Common, where a day can be spent

exploring the prehistoric and Roman camps, re-enacting that battle for the Prayer Book in 1549, and visualising that great scene when all Devon collected here to withstand Napoleon.

EAST BUDLEIGH CHURCH

Hayes Barton House, near East Budleigh

Torquay—Vane Hill and Harbour

CHAPTER III

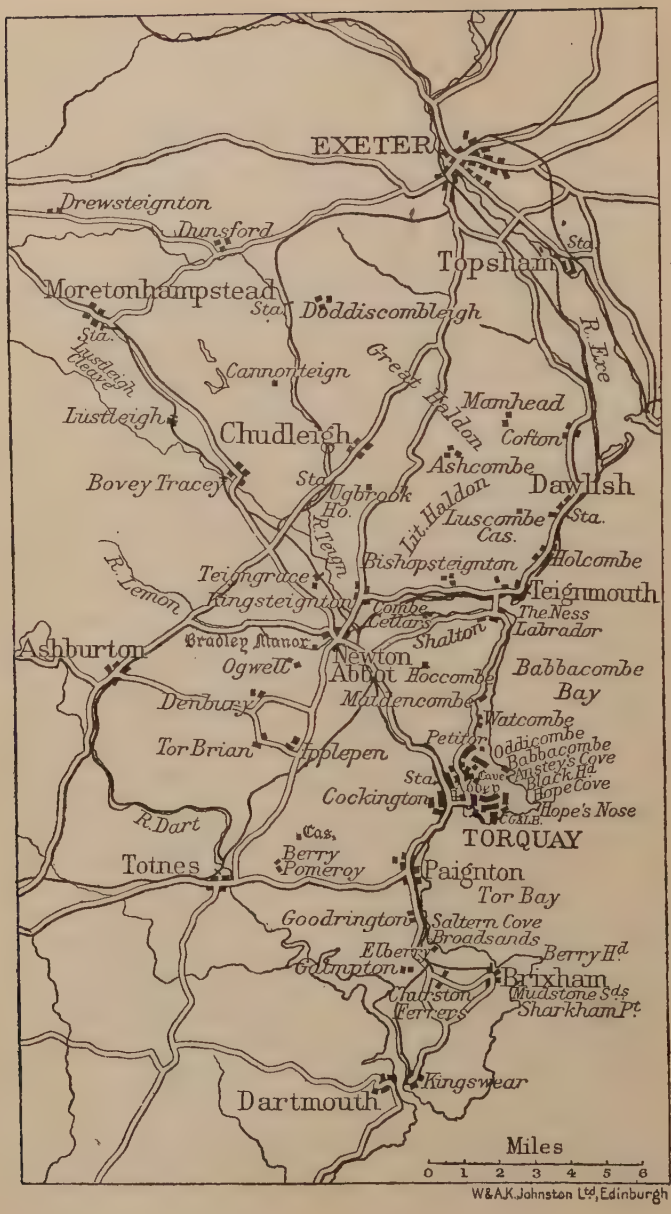
TORQUAY AND DISTRICT

(1) The Town and Southwards to Kingswear

IT is difficult to find an Englishman who has not at some time in his life visited Torquay. It is easy to find thousands who have only explored one small section of its glories. Seaside resorts are not given as a rule to hiding their light under a bushel. Their attractions, together with their limitations, strike the eye as soon as one emerges from the station.

Torquay unveils her beauties very gradually. It is not from the railway, which is tucked away unobtrusively, that her peculiar glories are to be seen. Built, like Bath and Rome, on seven hills, her full majesty is not to be realised unless perhaps from the sea or from the height of her new reservoir. Each separate arc of beauty is self-contained and individual. Visitors may arrive in their tens of thousands, but within a few minutes of their arrival they become invisible. Here is no hard glittering ruler-line of a grand promenade, going endlessly, tirelessly on until it emerges into the grander, no-less-straight and tiring promenade of the next resort. Instead of that, you find yourself in a cleft of a vast bay, where you may see without being seen. The high rocks stretching down to the front are hidden in a forest of wonderful exotic palms and flowers which seem to flourish nowhere but here.

Among these you wander along myriad labyrinthine paths looking out over the exquisitely-shaped bay from red-roofed Paignton to the distant masts of Brixham's



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Torquay, from Vane Hill

Torquay—Tor Abbey Sands

trawlers nestling under their green headland. Instead of a regular line of hotels along the sea-front, to your surprise and delight the first house you notice is a completely unspoilt medieval castle, standing far back but plainly visible in its own park as if there were no town within miles.

Torre Abbey, the seat of the Carys, founded in 1196, still contains an ivy-covered tower and gate-house, chapter house and chancel arches, refectory and grange, known as Spanish Barn because the Armada flagship's crew were imprisoned in it. In front of it is the private park, part of which is turned into public tennis courts.

The sea wall, separating the promenade from the splendid stretch of Torre Abbey sands, is made of red "conglomerate," a warm, rugged, and most picturesque compound of sandstone.

Waldon Hill, with white sunny houses in every nook and cranny, stands between you and the town, but you have the alternative of encircling its base either through the Princess Gardens by the side of the jetties of the outer harbour, where you will receive much encouragement to go by motor boat to one of Torbay's thousand and one magic coves, or along the terrace gardens among the cacti and the palms, where the honest English honeysuckle, bramble, and nasturtium mingle with aloes and rare hothouse lilies.

As you inhale the odours of a thousand fragrant flowers, and gaze through tropical green foliage down into the dazzling clear blue waters of the bay below, you no longer wonder at Napoleon's "Enfin, voilà un beau pays" as he surveyed the scene from *Bellerophon's* decks, or his more definite appreciation on a closer acquaintance, "It is like Porto Ferrajo in Elba." It is perhaps natural, if not usual, for an Englishman to find that his native land contains beauty spots worthy of comparison with those in other lands. It is certainly not usual for a captured foe to express such spontaneous pleasure at the scenery of the land which

has brought about his downfall. One does not suspect Napoleon of flattery.

The inner and outer harbours are always full of interest. Racing yachts, excursion steamers, motor-boats, cargo-steamers lading and unlading, fishing smacks, and ocean-going tramps are to be found in these waters with, as an occasional special treat, gunboats, mine-sweepers, or cruisers to show the summer visitors that the Navy is still very much alive.

At the back of the inner harbour is the shopping centre. There will be time for this on a wet day. The wise tourist will cling to the coast to explore the outside edges before venturing inland.

TORQUAY—LONDON BRIDGE

Beyond the swimming baths there is a climb to a high level limestone plateau known as Daddy Hole Plain, from which there is a fine view of the Shag Rock at our feet far below, and of the strange arch jutting out from the mainland known as London Bridge. Berry Head lies four miles out across the bay, and immediately in front of us on our coast journey lie the shining white sands of Meadfoot in their setting of the green trees of Lincombe Hill. Beyond this is the famous broad Marine Ilsham Drive so cunningly

Torquay—Thatcher Rock

Torquay—Cockington Village

built that even in this tree-covered hilly area the tourist can realise something of the changing colours and contours of the peninsula of Hope's Nose. There are rocks out at sea, one white with gulls, the other black with cormorants. There is Hope Cove, with its myriad rocks inviting scramblers to descend from Black Head, and a hundred shady walks to Anstey's Cove, a sandy bathing bay bounded by giant limestone rocks, completely embowered among the trees. Near the top of this cove is Kent's Cavern, by far the most historically interesting feature of Torquay. In Sir Arthur Keith's opinion it is the richest cave in Europe. Some of the implements belong to the Ice Age and prove that the cave was used as a human habitation in that unknown epoch. There are two parallel caves which connect, divided into rooms, some small, some big, the biggest being about sixty feet long and thirty feet high.

Beyond Anstey's Cove is Redgate Beach, after which we climb Wall's Hill to be richly rewarded by looking down on Babbacombe and Oddicombe.

Babbacombe Beach contains a few thatched whitewashed cottages clinging to the steep wooded hill-side, and a tiny jetty. Oddicombe Beach is separated from it by a series of loose boulders, and is a wide strip of white sand flanked by red sandstone cliffs with woods and rich green fields stretching to the cliff edge.

Even in the Torquay area there is no view to compare with that to be got from the top of Babbacombe Down on a clear day. The whole sweep of that fine bay that ends in Portland Bill can be seen, and through glasses one can pick

TORQUAY—ANSTEY'S COVE

out from the red and white cliffs all the East Devon watering-places from Lyme Regis to Exmouth. Nearer and clearer are red Dawlish, red Teignmouth, and the perfect blend of clear blue sea, red sandstone, green field, and silver yellow sand that make up the incomparable charm of Oddicombe, Petitor, and Watcombe Glen, least known of all Torquay's hidden arbours.

It is to be remembered that all these coves are within a mile or so from the centre of the town, that they face south, east, north, and west, so that you can ensure always being in the sun and out of the wind. They are joined by hundreds of interesting paths all overgrown with shrubs so that you see no one and get all the shade you need and yet are not so overgrown as to shut out the view.

It is a good thing after walking round this coast-line to take a boat and survey with pride the extent of your tour. If you take a boat first you will never have the courage to undertake the walk. It looks, and in point of fact is, a considerable undertaking. I have myself covered a distance of twenty-eight miles in the borough of Torquay without going over the same ground twice. That included climbing each of the seven hills, looking out over Dartmoor from the reservoir, and walking inland as far as Cockington.

There are some villages so often photographed and written about that one is afraid to visit them lest they should prove disappointing. Clovelly is one of these, Cockington another. The lane leading to Cockington is often unpleasantly full of walkers, but not even a race crowd could destroy the charm of its green contours. Postcard sellers and photographers stand at the cross-roads by the smithy, which is not remarkable ; but soon we are in the grounds of Cockington Court which has not changed hands for three hundred years. Here are giant oaks and elms, a low-lying mullion-windowed manor, and by its side an ivy-clad tiny church of the fourteenth century.

I do not know quite what draws such multitudes to see a church which is surpassed in beauty by many others in the neighbourhood. It must be its accessibility. It is at any rate good that one survival of the feudal system should be visited and appreciated by multitudes who do not ordinarily take the trouble to investigate the insides of churches.

While we are on this side of Torquay we certainly shall not be so unwise as to miss Paignton, which attracts large crowds by reason of its stretches of sand.

The red sandstone church here, much less frequently visited than Cockington, possesses some of the finest stone carving in the country, on its white screen. The town is famous for its white-pot pudding which was supposed to be seven years in the making, seven more in the baking, and seven more in the eating. It was made once every fifty years, but as in 1859 it took twenty-five horses to drag it through the town, the practice was discontinued thereafter. There is an old picturesque small harbour at the west end of the town,

PAIGNTON PARISH CHURCH
KIRKHAM CHANTRY SCREEN

and in the palace, now in ruins, Miles Coverdale once lived.

For those who like on holiday a continuous round of tennis, golf, bathing, and yachting, Paignton is much to be recommended. It is bracing and, owing to its comparative freedom from trees and absence of hills, gets all the sun that shines.

Beyond it to the south lie the bathing coves of Goodrington, Saltern, Broadsands, and Elberry (quietest and loveliest of them all), enticing one on over the green fields and red cliffs to Brixham, as different from Paignton as Paignton is from Torquay.

Brixham is after the Newlyn-Port Isaac pattern, made for business rather than pleasure, and ending by being far more æsthetically satisfying than any of the resorts built to attract the merely leisured.

In the first place it is grey and old. Its streets are narrow, and connected by long flights of steps quite different from but quite as attractive and individual as the cobbled streets of Clovelly. Then one is struck by the size, solidity, and beauty of the outer harbour, which is always full of red-sailed, black trawlers with their splashes of yellow and red paint on every spare bit of woodwork.

PAIGNTON—NORMAN DOORWAY
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

Paignton

Brixham

A statue to William III occupies a prominent position on the Strand.

He landed on 5th November, 1688, and one Peter Varwell, running out to sea to carry the new king on his shoulders, was promised a reward. On going to London to claim it he found that another man had forestalled him and claimed the reward in his name successfully.

A most interesting cavern on Windmill Hill, once the bed of a mountain stream, has revealed the bones of

BRIXHAM—BERRY HEAD

prehistoric animals and the flint weapons of prehistoric man.

The first vicar of the church of Lower Brixham was Henry Francis Lyte, who, on finding himself doomed to die, went out after preaching his farewell sermon and wrote "Abide with me."

I prefer to associate Brixham with the best loved of our hymns rather than with one of the least lovable of our monarchs.

The walk over Berry Head and round to Sharkham Point by way of Mudstone Sands richly repays the extra exercise entailed, for on these windy cliffs, which are as innocent of trees as the chalk cliffs of Beachy Head, you are outside Torbay for the first time and get a foretaste of the

grey ruggedness which is later on to become so typical of this coast.

It is worth while wandering along the tops all the way round to Kingswear, for the track gets ever wilder and rougher and the scenery bolder and more fascinating.

From Kingswear, which is to Dartmouth what Portlemouth is to Salcombe, an admirable but less civilised foil

BRIXHAM TRAWLERS

on the eastern bank of the river, one can return to Torquay by way of Churston Ferrers, where there is a golf course on a particularly pleasant upland overlooking Galmpton.

(2) North to Dawlish

No one would think of leaving Torquay without paying a visit to Berry Pomeroy Castle, which is an ancient ruined fortress, all covered with moss and ivy, standing on a knoll above the Dart. It was built in two periods, the earlier by Ralph de Pomerai, who came over with William the Conqueror, and the later by one of the Seymours. The outer shell of this part of the house, consisting of fourteen perfect stone mullioned windows with ivy covering every inch of the walls, is exquisite. It is remarkable that through the whole of its history it has been either in the hands of the Pomeroys or the Seymours. The old fortress, which was wellnigh impregnable from the north owing

Kingswear

Berry Pomeroy Castle

to the rocky ridge on which it was built, was originally four-square with one entrance only on the wooded side to the south through a double gateway between tall towers. The Seymour additions, which cost £20,000, were never completed.

In the church are monuments to Pomeroys and Seymours and a tablet to John Prince, author of "Devon Worthies," a book no visitor to Devon can afford to leave unread, who died here after being vicar for forty-two years. It was he who described Elizabeth Champernowne as a "frolic lady." The children of another Champernowne by Sir Edward Seymour are all carved on a monument here, so we can see for ourselves how far they are cursed with the family "frolicsomeness."

In order to get right off the beaten track a bee-line may be made from Berry across country to Ipplepen and Tor Brian. The former is remarkable for its rock scenery and underground river at Stoneycoombs Glen, and the latter for an equally unexpected wooded glen of great beauty. Both have fifteenth-century churches with rood-screens of great interest. Tor Brian was the original home of the Petre family.

The walk should be continued to Ashburton, a market-town which possesses a fine church-tower and stands in a well-watered valley. One of the houses in North Street is known as the Card House because its painted slates are cut to resemble the pips on a pack of cards.

POMEROY ARMS, FROM A TOMB IN BERRY POMEROY CHURCH

The main road to the east from here leads us to Newton Abbot, a flourishing, clean and alert market town, an important junction, and the home of a famous agricultural college. It is one of the most popular centres from which to explore Dartmoor. There are in the neighbourhood some exceptionally fine old houses, notably Forde, once the seat of the Reynells and Courtneys, where William III spent the night after landing at Brixham. Bradley Manor, on the banks of the Lemon, was built in the fourteenth century, and is still inhabited. Close to it is Ogwell Mill, which possesses a most unusual crescent-shaped gable, and Denbury Manor, a house of great antiquity.

Haccombe, on the Torquay side of Newton, is one of the smallest parishes in England. Its ivy-clad church was built in 1328, and on its door are nailed two horseshoes which commemorate a wager between a Carew and Champernowne, Carew maintaining that he would swim his horse further out to sea and back again than his rival. To celebrate his victory he hung his horse's shoes on the church door. The church is full of Carew monuments, and the big ugly house is the seat of that famous family who trace their descent from Othere, the Constable of Windsor in the reign of Edward the Confessor, whose son Gerald married Nest, daughter of Rhys ap Tudor, Prince of South Wales, after being seduced as a child by her captor, Henry I. In 1108, Owen ap Cadwgan, fascinated by her

ASHBURTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Ashburton

Ogwell Mill, near Newton Abbot

great beauty, set fire to her husband's castle and carried her off. She was recaptured by Gerald and became the mother of Giraldus, the famous topographer of Wales.

An excellent circular tour can be taken from Newton by following the railway over the gorse-covered common of Heathfield to Bovey Tracey, where Cromwell unexpectedly rounded up Wentworth's troops, the officers escaping by throwing money for which the Roundhead soldiers scrambled. The scenery gets rapidly more beautiful as we climb up the wooded valley to Lustleigh,

NEWTON ABBOT—FORDE HOUSE

where huge granite boulders lie all over the steep hillsides, and the river at Horsham Steps flows under great stones and can be heard but seldom seen. Lustleigh Cleave, a narrow steep wooded valley, two miles long, is like an Isle of Wight chine on a much wilder scale, full of queer-shaped rocks with names like the Round of Beef, Nutcracker, and Gate of Heaven. The church contains monuments of the Prouze family, who probably owned the fine fourteenth-century rectory. Moretonhampstead, the next village, is the terminus of one railway and the gateway to Dartmoor. There are some early seventeenth-century almshouses of great beauty and a three-hundred-year-old dancing tree. A rock known as Blackiston reminds us of the story of the young Moreton mother who was unable to resist the bells calling her to

the Fair, so she left her baby unprotected, only to find, on her return, that it had been picked to the bone on Blackiston Stone by three ravens.

A six-mile walk to the north brings one to Drewsteignton, where there is the only cromlech in Devon, known as the Spinster's Rock. The flat slab is 15 feet

BOVEY TRACEY—OLD WATER MILL

long and 10 feet broad, weighs 16 tons, and is supported by three stones each 7 feet high.

We here rejoin the Teign in Fingle Gorge, one of the richest of all Devon combes, and watch from the track half-way up the fern-covered steep slopes the brown water winding its way to Fingle Bridge, with its three grey stone arches, buttressed, and ivy-clad, far down in the hollow below Cranbrook and Prestonbury Castles. The special glory of Fingle lies in its masses of ferns and the way in which the hills come in alternately from north and south to add mystery and beauty of line to the glen.

We follow the river past Dunsford, the home of the Fulfords, where there is an oak, at one time cut level at the top where Fulford and his tenants both dined and danced

on court days, to Doddiscombleigh, where there is good stained-glass in the church, past Cannonteign, the home of Lord Exmouth, to Chudleigh, where Lord Clifford entertained Dryden at his house at Ugbrook. There are rocks here with a Pixies' Cave in which bones of prehistoric animals and relics of prehistoric man have been unearthed. Soon after passing Teigngrace we come to the broad estuary where the river becomes tidal and changes its bright amber for bright blue as it flows into the harbour of Teignmouth.

Every traveller by train knows this beautiful sheet of water, which resembles an inland loch or lake at high water by reason of the almost imperceptible straits that link it up with the open sea where the red-nosed, green-haired Ness bends protectingly over the raised beach of the Den.

Shaldon's wooden bridge, just a hundred years old, nearly two thousand feet long, with its thirty-four arches and drawbridge in the middle, is known to and admired by everybody. Few visitors take the trouble to cross the bridge to Shaldon's shelving beach and protected harbour. It is well worth it.

BOVEY TRACEY—CROMWELL'S ARCH

Just round the Ness is Labrador, which got its name from a seventeenth-century sea-trader who used to ply between Teignmouth and Labrador. It was once the haunt of smugglers. The coastline is here rich in red cliffs emerging from a wealth of woods, and it is worth keeping to the coast and visiting all these glens and

coves, at least as far as Maidencombe, with its waterfall at Watcombe, before turning inland to Combe Cellars, perhaps the best patronised of all South Devon villages at tea-time. Lying as it does far up the estuary, at high tide on a summer afternoon so striking a quietude descends on all its visitors that one wonders whether they are not all thinking of letting the world slip by and mooring their barques here. On the north side of the estuary lie Kingsteignton and Bishopsteignton with fine fourteenth-century churches.

Teignmouth has seldom had justice done to its peculiar merits. Its broad front and wide stretch of gently shelving bathing sands make visitors forget that behind the Den lies an old-world harbour, which has had a not uneventful history. The French pirates burnt it in 1340, and in the reign of William of Orange attempted a second raid, landing a thousand men who tore up Bibles and broke down pulpits, but were beaten back to their ships by an infuriated Devon Militia. Keats finished "Endymion" here while looking after a dying brother.

The sea-walk along the wall that divides the railway from the sea reveals a succession of isolated rocks of vivid terra-cotta, strangely and wonderfully shaped by erosion of the coast into the likeness of parsons and clerks, bishops and toads, and few travellers on the railway between Teignmouth and Dawlish can resist the temptation to keep their heads out of the window in their eagerness to trace these life-like shapes cut in the red rocks. But the interior here is equally enticing. No one would dream of omitting to take

MORETONHAMPSTEAD—ALMSHOUSES

Shaldon and River Teign

Teignmouth, from Shaldon Heights

advantage of the engineering feat that makes this sea-walk so easy, but the ridge of Little Haldon, equi-distant between Teignmouth and Dawlish to the north, affords one of the finest views in South Devon, for the whole coast-line from white distant Dorset on the south-east, to the warm red cliffs of Torquay, on the south-west stands as multi-coloured rim to the peerless blue of the vast calm bay.

From Little Haldon the purple moors with their black tors to the west and north remind one of the ease with which Dartmoor can be reached from Teignmouth, and the saddleback of Great Haldon should certainly be climbed by day in order to see the misty blue weald of Mid-Devon, and at night-time to see the twinkling lights of the city of Exeter on the east and of Newton Abbot on the west far down in the valleys below.

Haldon is a vast common standing about eight hundred feet above the sea, running north and south from the "Folly" of Belvedere Tower, past the famous race-course down towards the sea through wooded Ash-combe, the home of the Kirkhams, to Mamhead, where there is a great park and famous collection of camellias and orange trees. Boswell is reported to have sworn under Mamhead's nine-hundred-year-old yew never to get drunk any more. Near here is Cofton, which possesses in its thirteenth-century church a mother-of-pearl chalice, supposed to have been taken from the Spaniards.

At Lidwell the ghost still walks of a priest who used to lure travellers to his house, feed them richly, and then murder them.

We can come into Dawlish by way of Halcome Down and Luscombe Castle, a creeper-covered, battlemented house flanked by fine woods and fronted by well-rolled lawns. The house looks a good

SHILSTONE CROMLECH—DREWSTEIGNTON

BRANCH

deal older than its age, which is about a hundred and thirty.

Dawlish, in spite of always being mentioned in the same breath as Teignmouth, is not in the least like it. Its special difference and peculiar charm lies in the Dawlish water, a brook which flows through the middle of the town with banks of flower gardens and green lawns to the cove where it emerges into the sea. Teignmouth looks, but is not, new. Dawlish unexpectedly has no history.

As the author of " Ingoldsby Legends " said :—

> " Half village—half town it is—pleasant but smallish—
> A place I'd suggest
> As one of the best
> For a man breaking down who needs absolute rest."

It is snug, quiet, and guarded by sentinels of red cliffs on either side and by its great sea-wall. A hundred years ago it was a fishing village. It is now one of the most popular bathing resorts on the coast and is in point of fact the first place after leaving Paddington where we see the open sea.

Dawlish

Dawlish—The Gardens

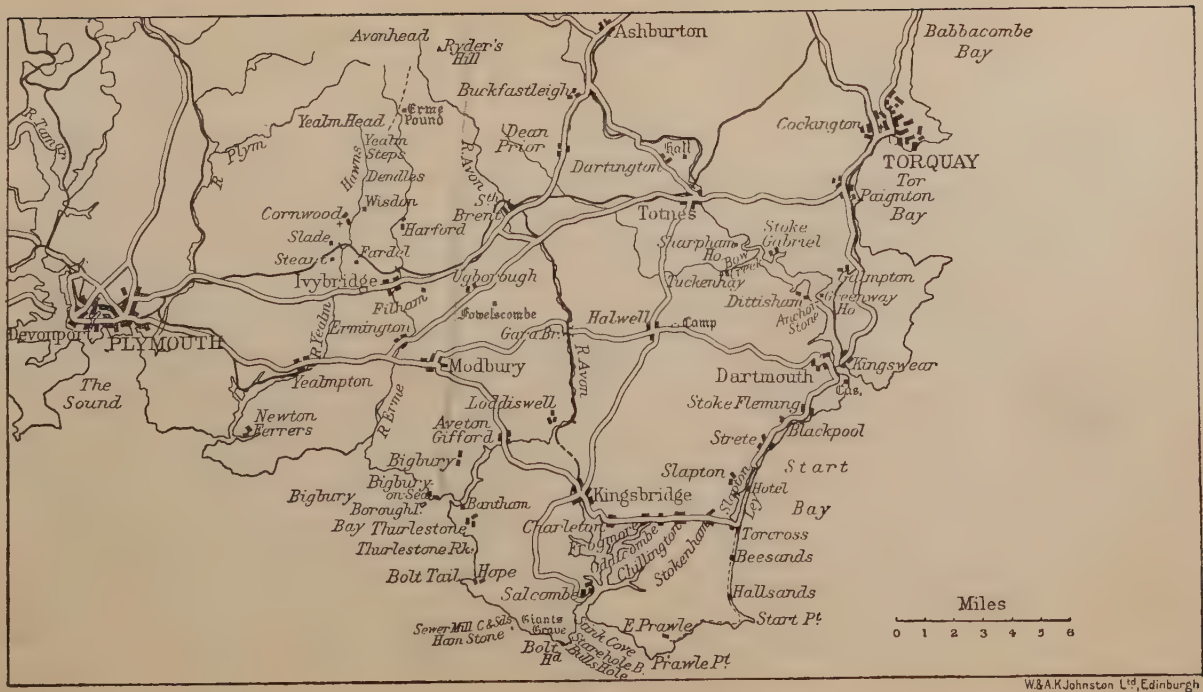
CHAPTER IV

THE SOUTH HAMS

(1) The Valley of the Dart

ONE is for ever meeting people who are anxious to spend their holidays in Devon but are put off by fear of its being overrun. To them I would say, " make a bee-line for the South Hams," a district which is perhaps the richest in all the county and yet so little exploited that few people seem to know where it is or how to get there. In point of fact it is the easiest place in the world to get to, the hardest, by reason of its manifold charms, to leave.

To reach it you merely take a train to Kingswear and cross by ferry to Dartmouth. There are few sights to compare with that first view across the water. If you chance on it by night you get a vision of a deep broad black water winding its way inland through steep valleys thronged with trees to the very edge of the lapping waves. Green, white, and red lights tossing in midstream betray the presence of white-sailed yachts and ocean-going liners, barges, and yawls at anchor. The lights on the opposite hill dotted about so precipitously that it is none too easy to tell where the houses end and the stars begin, give the impression of a nocturnal pageant in a fairy castle, an impression that is only heightened as one is drawn quietly across the Dart, a river that requires but little imagination to interpret as the moat that separates the enchanted citadel from the mundane world. The drawbridge is literally a bridge that draws you by an invisible magnet to a city so different



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Dartmouth

Mouth of the Dart and Dartmouth Castle

from the rest of England that as you step on to the cobbled quay and dimly glimpse the medieval, richly carved, gabled houses bending courteously to greet you, you feel that you have been transported not merely to another land but to another century.

Queen Victoria, who seems to have seen it first by day and in the rain, was reminded of the Rhine, but she does the Dart an injustice. The comparison would be more apt if on seeing the Rhine she had said, "This is almost as good as the Dart." To see Dartmouth for the first time by day is to marvel at the beauty of a myriad ships flanked by green sloping woods, to admire the comparison between the ultra-modern red-brick many-windowed Royal Naval College proudly perched aloft, and the narrow overhanging black and white fourteenth-century shops in the old town at its feet. It is frequently not easy to recapture the spirit of a once famous city, but Dartmouth, like Chester, defies modernity.

As you disembark and regard the faces of the fine-featured sailors on the quay your thoughts revert on the instant to Chaucer's Shipman :—

> "The hote somer had maad his hewe al broun;
> And, certeinly, he was a good felawe—
> Hardy he was, and wys to undertake;
> With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.
> He knew wel alle the heavenes, as they were,
> From Gootland to the cape of Finistere,
> And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne."

It needs no knowledge of history to tell us that we are now looking at the cradle of England's sea-power. It was from this estuary that William Rufus embarked to relieve in 1099 the castle of Mans, it was here that the Crusader's fleet gathered before setting out for Palestine in 1190. Dartmouth alone manned 31 ships with 757 men at the siege of Calais, and herself undertook to keep France at bay on innumerable occasions. Not all her fighting was done away from home. The French regarding the place, rightly as it turned out,

STOKE GABRIEL CHURCH

Dittisham-on-the-Dart

Old Mill Creek, River Dart

quays, sandy bathing beaches and shady woods. Up one of them lies Galmpton, up another Stoke Gabriel, with white cottages nestling on the water's edge. Bow creek lures one to explore remote Tuckenhay, but the main stream winds round Sharpham, the sanctuary of rooks and herons. Then we enter the long, straight, smooth waterway with the high red sandstone tower of Totnes church as our well-marked goal at the end.

As soon as you stand on Totnes bridge you realise that its glories, if different from those of Dartmouth, are no less memorable. The natives, for instance, will show you the very stone on which Brutus landed from Troy, and said:—

> "Here I sit and here I rest
> And this town shall be called Totnes."

The fact that the Brutus Stone is more likely to be a corruption of Bruiter's Stone, from which the town crier used to bruit the day's news, does not shake their faith. Did not Geoffrey of Monmouth give credence to the Brutus story? What was good enough for Geoffrey is good enough for Totnes. Whatever its history, the Mayor (who takes precedence of the Lord Mayor of London) still stands on it to proclaim the accession of a new sovereign.

TOTNES—EAST GATE

The walls of the ancient town and the East Gate can still be seen, but let not the visitor imagine that he can walk round the walls as he can at Chester. Totnes' past glory can best be gauged

from a visit to the Guildhall, where you may see the actual prison cell within earshot of the judgment-seat. The court-house is panelled and still in use, and there are paintings by Brockedon, who was born here, and many interesting relics of the old town.

The church has a fine stone rood-screen, but restoration has deprived it of much of the interest one is led to expect from so ancient a history and so magnificent

TOTNES—THE GUILDHALL

an exterior. The castle is supposed to have been built by Judhael de Totenais, the Norman to whom William I gave the manor, but Hooker thought it was built by the people as a defence against the Danes. From the ruins you get a good view of the valley of the Dart and the whole rich undulating orchard-covered paradise known as the South Hams.

Above Totnes the Dart ceases to be tidal. There are no more treacherous mudbanks. It runs quietly through meadows past Dartington Hall, the home for centuries of the Champernownes, the thirteenth-century Banqueting

Totnes and River Dart

Buckfast Abbey

Chamber till recently in ruins, now being, so I am told, reconstructed as an agricultural college, past the rectory where Froude the historian lived, with the Ashburton branch of the railway for companion until it reaches Buckfastleigh, where pilgrimage is made by every visitor to Devon to see the six Benedictine monks at work on their reconstruction of the famous Abbey. This stupendous undertaking recalls the old-time guilds who showed the same concentrated devotion in raising noble fanes. It is hoped that the Abbey will be completed by 1932, in time to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the purchase of the site. The original monastery is supposed to have been Celtic in origin, refounded in A.D. 980, and again as a Cistercian house in 1137.

The English church, perhaps because it stands on a hill and is less accessible, is less fortunate in attracting visitors, but it is worth going to see the tomb of Richard Cabell of Brooke, whose body was placed under a heavy stone and a penthouse built over it with iron gratings to prevent his ghost from returning to haunt the neighbourhood. At his death the Whisht hounds are supposed to have chased him across Dartmoor and surrounded him howling.

Lovers of good lyrics will visit Dean Prior, where that sweetest singer among all the Caroline poets, Robert Herrick, was vicar from 1629 till 1647, when he was ejected. After the restoration he came back and died there in 1674, which seems odd in view of his often expressed contempt and dislike for the county that he seemed unable to leave.

Dartmouth may be regained by going on to South Brent and then following the winding Avon Valley in the train as far as Gara Bridge, an unknown wooded valley of great beauty, and then turning east by way of Halwell where is a perpendicular church and an oval camp made of stone. For my part I prefer to return by the way I came and catch the steamer from Totnes. For one

thing, the Dart changes with every mood, every hour, and every phase of the tide. For another, to go back over one's tracks is to see an entirely new scene. Ten miles is all too short a distance, an hour all too short a time, in which to exhaust the delight of watching this panorama of trees growing down to the water-side, these peaceful white-washed hamlets shyly peeping like dryads from their green mantles, and to wonder at these mammoth ocean-going ships resting at ease after their hazardous war-time exploits.

(2) From Dartmouth to Plymouth

There is a choice of two roads from Dartmouth to Stoke Fleming, both steep, one climbing by way of the old red-brick market-place, unlike any other in the British Isles, past one of the entrances to the Royal Naval College, the other up a pleasing valley nearer the sea. As they join at the Pound-house, a mile or so outside the town, it matters little which one takes.

Soon we are in Stoke Fleming, where a fourteenth-century granite cross, once the property of a farmer who used it as a gate-post, now commemorates those who fell in the War. Immediately below the village lies Blackpool, a tiny sandy cove, where Warwick the King-maker landed and Breton invaders were driven back. You come on it suddenly through a belt of trees and catch glimpses first of a sea clear and blue as the Mediterranean, then of palms and other exotic plants, then of a thatched barn, a green field leading directly on to the beach, a winding lane parting the crescent field as if it were a head of green hair, then red cliffs rising sheer on either side, protecting buttresses from east and west, and as you reach sea-level and look inland you see three thatched white cottages, a blaze of fuchsias and hydrangeas

Slapton Ley, from Torcross

Torcross and Slapton Sands

emerging from a tiny wood through which flows a bubbling mill-stream. Strenuous efforts have been made by the owner of the property to keep this beauty spot to himself, but if Blackpool (Lancs) can justifiably claim that it has no rival in one type of English scenery it can with equal truth be contended that Blackpool (Devon) has no rival among the unspoilt coves of the south coast. It will always be the haunt of lovers of quietude, for none but the quiet are likely to want to go there. No sooner have you descended to it than you have to climb again to Strete, whence you look down on that great stretch of sand continuing for seven miles that fringes Start Bay.

Almost at once you go down again to the open hedgeless road that is like no other road in the Kingdom. On both sides is water, the sea on your left breaking on the sand and shingle, the freshwater lake of Slapton Ley lying on your right where men fish from rowing boats with more than usual success. Reeds growing by the side of the lake are cut, stacked, and harvested like corn and used to make firm and most attractive hedges for all the neighbouring gardens. A little less than half-way along this strange shore stands Slapton Hotel, an inn of great fame among anglers.

About a mile away across the water, connected by a by-road, but out of sight behind a hill, stands Slapton village, famous for its fourteenth-century college founded by Sir Guy de Bryan, standard-bearer to Edward III, and one of the originators of the Order of the Garter. Poole, the seat of the Bryans, was also the home of Sir John Hawkins, whose wife kept two pages to unroll a carpet of red velvet before her as she walked to church.

Slapton Ley, as one can see for oneself, is as remarkable in its bird life as in its fish. As one continues on the way to Torcross the chance of at least one unfamiliar type of bird rising from the reeds with strange cry and peculiar flight is considerable.

Torcross, at the end of the lake, is composed of a single

row of whitewashed, thatched fisherman's cottages standing between sea and lake, and another row huddled up under the southern hill where the road turns abruptly inland with the lake. Baring-Gould gives an account of the Torcross Newfoundland dogs who swim out in rough weather and catch the ropes thrown to them from the boats and then swim ashore with the ropes in their mouths. Torcross is an admirable centre from which to set out to explore the rocky and wild coast scenery between Start Point and Prawle Point. There is an inn at Beesands, an hotel at Hall Sands, and another at Gara Rock. There is a cliff path all the way round, and a wilder piece of coast scenery is not to be found even on the north coast. As there are no roads beyond that leading over the downs to East Prawle there is no danger of overcrowding.

The main road on leaving Slapton Ley gives us a quite fresh aspect of Devon. Villages follow so close upon each other's heels that we are reminded of the road from Blandford to Shaftesbury, or that which so angered Cobbett in his rural ride from Salisbury to Warminster. First comes Stokenham, with its fine church standing on the hill-side in the middle of a field. Chillington and Oddicombe lead us to Frogmore, where we suddenly find ourselves crossing a creek, muddy enough to afford delight to whole regiments of ducks and geese. From Charleton we look down on the whole estuary, and after crossing another creek we are in Kingsbridge, which has, queerly enough, no river and therefore no bridge. The sea just stops at the foot of the town. It is busy on market days and gay on fair days, during which a stuffed glove is hung out of the market-porch window, carried in procession to the Guildhall, and then set up on a pole. The custom of wassailing the apple trees on the Eve of Epiphany was observed here. This entailed dancing round the trees, drinking their health, and singing a queer song in their honour. They were also beaten to ensure good cider.

Kingsbridge is the home of "white ale," a mixture of eggs and "grout," that most people find extremely distasteful.

Obeying that very natural instinct to follow water whenever possible, the wise tourist will explore the

KINGSBRIDGE—TOWN HALL

Kingsbridge estuary from the Salcombe steamer, which, however, often fails to come right up to the town owing to the mud. As soon as you set sail you find the channel marvellously wide if not always deep. It is not comparable in majesty or variety with the Totnes–Dartmouth voyage, but no waterway can be dull in Devon, and here, as there, are creeks in plenty, and the same diversity of birds.

Salcombe harbour is alive with craft of every kind, come into the haven from the menacing rocks of Bolt Head. Salcombe itself is a sleepy place set, like Dartmouth, on the side of a hill, a combination of narrow steep streets, and tarred warehouses with their owners' names, Chant &

Dornom, picked out in white paint. It was the last place to hold out for Charles I, and Sir Edmund Fortescue was permitted to march away with arms and colours flying as a tribute to his courage in defence.

Just as at Torcross the main road turned inland, leaving the wild coast scenery as a reward for the walker, so at Salcombe must the traveller who would explore the high cliffs between Bolt Head and Bolt Tail trust to the cliff paths, for there are no roads except that to Stink Cove and Sewer Mill Sands, two forbidding names for two of the most enchanting bathing beaches in this area. " Sewer " is a corruption of " Saeware," meaning Seafarers.

Off the coast at Sewer Mill Cove is the Ham Stone, which husbands who have no children are recommended to uproot with a pickaxe. There is a cave here called Bull's Hole, which is supposed to probe right under Bolt Head, a rock which rises 430 feet sheer from the sea, to Saw-Mill Bay. A bull is reported to have traversed it, but to have taken a week to do it and changed from black to white in the process. Otters may often be seen in the cave, but no bulls. There is an earthwork about 170 feet long below Bolt Head in Starehole Bay, called Giant's Grave, where the Danes are supposed to have landed. It is an exhilarating scramble over these

SALCOMBE—SHARP TOR, BOLT HEAD

Salcombe—North Sands and Bolt Head

Salcombe

smugglers' tracks to the village of Hope, where there is a tiny harbour, in the bottom of which lies the wreck of a Spanish galleon, sunk at the time of the Armada. This was formerly the haunt of smugglers, but is now rapidly becoming sophisticated.

All the grim rocks now give place to gentle green slopes, rock-strewn beaches, and sand dunes. Thurlestone Rock, an isolated crag with a large hole " thirled " through it,

HOPE VILLAGE—TYPICAL DEVON COTTAGES

stands a little away from the shore inviting exploration. Beyond it is a sandy cove, a golf course, and two enormous hotels. The village of Thurlestone is old-world and unspoilt, the church ancient and full of interest, and beyond it there is a pleasant walk to the ferry across the Avon at Bantham which takes you to Bigbury-on-Sea. Its charm lies in the fact that it is separated at low tide from Borough Island by two sandy beaches, and you can bathe facing south-east or north-west according to the wind and your fancy.

Bigbury is perhaps a good centre from which to explore the three rivers of this area of the South Hams, but for my part I should risk the few extra miles and take up my headquarters at Thurlestone for the sake of its natural beauty.

The Avon, pronounced Awne, which is the nearest river, has a comparatively wide estuary as far as the flat meadows by Aveton (Auton) Gifford, where there is a

THURLESTONE

cruciform church of great antiquity and singular beauty. It then winds its way up through rich apple-orchard country and thick woods to Loddiswell, much frequented by fishermen, possessing in the Rings a prehistoric camp, with an added fortress of the Danish period. The view from it—it stands 700 feet above sea-level—is superb, and it is supposed that the Normans drove back from here the three sons of Harold in 1069 after they had ravaged nine manors belonging to Judhael de Totenais. The whole valley of the Avon, through Gara and South

Thurlestone

Estuary of River Avon, Aveton Gifford

Brent to the wild wastes on the moor behind Ryder's Hill, where it rises, is very much worth exploring. There are many more famous Avons, none that is so little known or so well worth lingering over.

The Erme has a wider mouth, but pursues a shorter course through Ermington, where there is a leaning spire, Ivybridge, a small town best seen from the railway, and Harford on the moor past Erme Pound, where are barrows, stone rows, and ancient stunted woods, to its source very close both to the sources of the Avon and the Plym.

The Yealm has wooded creeks comparable with those on the Dart, and no Devon village has a better situation than Newton Ferrers. At Yealmpton (Yampton), there is a cave in which the bones of bears, rhinoceros, and elephants have been found. Further north it passes through Cornwood within easy reach of the famous old houses of Slade, Wisdon, Fardel, and Stead. In Fardel courtyard once stood a stone bearing the name "Fanoni Macquisini"; this reminder of an Irish invasion is now in the British Museum.

There is a ravine at Hawns and Dendles, and Yealm Steps, further on the moor, are most beautiful. There is a stone row over two miles long near Yealm Head which leads from a cairn right across the Erme at Erme Pound nearly to Avonhead where it ends in a kistvaen.

IVYBRIDGE—THE BRIDGE

Time should be set aside for visits to Modbury and Ugborough, which own no rivers, but are both full of interest. Modbury is a market town, curiously akin to South Molton, once the seat

of the Champernownes, one of whom, Sir Richard, took his famous musicians to Windsor to entertain Henry VIII, but, failing to be recompensed, refused to repeat the experiment for Elizabeth on the plea that his earlier visit had crippled him. "I'll cripple him still further," said the Queen, and proceeded to rob him of his manors.

Here lies that Elizabeth Champernowne who is described by Prince as a "frolic lady," for marrying three days after her father's death and two days after the death of her first husband.

Ugborough is famous for its fourteenth-century church, which possesses over thirty remarkable painted screens. Two old houses at Fowelscombe and Filham bear witness to the old-time prosperity of this district.

MODBURY

River Yealm at Yealmpton

Plymouth Sound and Drake's Island

CHAPTER V

PLYMOUTH AND DISTRICT

FOR some inexplicable reason Plymouth has hitherto failed to attract visitors in anything like the proper ratio to her merits. It is to be hoped that her slogan, no mean one, of "Centre of a Hundred Tours," will help to draw tourists, for it can only be through ignorance of her countless advantages that they have failed to make her acquaintance. England has no more majestic sight than that which catches the eye as one emerges on her vast Hoe. Plymouth Sound has the capacity to awaken more memories than any one other place in the world. What a history has been hers. For seven hundred years she has been one of the leading seaports, a rendezvous for the Black Prince on setting out for Poictiers, the landing-place of Warwick and Clarence in 1470, of Margaret of Anjou in 1471, of Katharine of Aragon in 1501. No Englishman is likely to forget the day that Drake, Hawkins, Ralegh, Frobisher, Sir Richard Grenville, and Lord Howard of Effingham played their famous game of bowls here, though scarcely less exciting was that August day in 1779, when the combined fleets of Spain and France stood off the Sound for four days not knowing that she

PLYMOUTH—ARMADA MEMORIAL

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was completely defenceless. It was from here that Martin Frobisher set out to explore Labrador and Drake to sail round the world. It was from here that Ralegh set out for Virginia, and the first Puritans, in 1607, sailed to find a new land. The stone still stands, and Americans flock to it, which marks the departure of the 101 Pilgrims in the *Mayflower*, a ship of 180 tons, on their sixty days' voyage into the unknown, to found the New England. It was from Plymouth that Captain Cook left in the *Endeavour* to open up New Zealand and New South Wales in 1768. It seems only in keeping with Plymouth traditions that the home of Drake, Hawkins, and Humphrey Gilbert should in after years be the home of Captain Scott.

Their home is worthy of her worthies. The Hoe could never be crowded. It is too big. The Sound will always have room for ships. It contains 4500 acres and is three miles wide and three miles long. Even the great grey battleships and transatlantic liners do not loom large here. Smeaton's lighthouse, after standing on the Eddystone Rock for 120 years, was taken down and built up again on the Hoe. There are memorials to the Navy in the Great War, to Sir Francis Drake, and to the men who fought in the South African War. There is a citadel built at the command of Charles II, and both seawards and landwards the place bristles with fortifications. The "Mayflower" stone stands near the Barbican, where you will see a fleet of trawlers in the harbour and fine-faced fishermen standing under the gabled houses, a peculiarly apt place, for this is old Plymouth, and the overhanging houses with their oriel windows and panelled rooms have altered scarcely at all since the Pilgrim Fathers left.

PLYMOUTH—DRAKE'S STATUE

Immediately at the back of the Hoe lies the mother church of St. Andrew, with fine low

wagon roof, a chantrey bust of Dr. Johnson's friend, Zachery Mudge, and a memorial of the actor Charles Mathews. At the door of the Mayor's pew lies the heart of Admiral Blake, who died in 1657 actually in sight of the harbour as he was returning home. His body, once in Westminster Abbey, was at the time of the Restoration thrown into a pit under the gallows at Tyburn together with that of Cromwell.

In the Guildhall the main historical events of the town are commemorated in stained glass. The Mayor's Parlour contains a portrait of Drake and a copy of his map of the world engraved on silver.

The shops and amusements are, as befits a town of 200,000 inhabitants, first-rate.

At Devonport the famous Dockyard, founded by William III, is open to the public and very well worth a visit.

To stand on the Hoe is to get confused with the innumerable islands that lie below. It is only when one surveys them in order that one begins to disentangle them. Most noticeable is Drake's Island, once a state prison, now a fort on which visitors are not allowed to roam. Turning inland on the western side is the Hamoaze, another word for the Tamar estuary, where we see all the battleships and the victualling yards at Stonehouse. Further on is the Lynher which leads to Trematon Castle, Beggar's Island, where Bamfylde Moore Carew is reported to have carried out one of his exploits, and Ince, where a famous Killigrew kept a wife in each of his four towers; but this is Cornwall-wards. Due north Brunel's great Saltash Bridge stretches high above the Tamar connecting Devon and Cornwall, and is nearly half a mile in length. It is 100 feet above high water mark and cost a quarter of a million to build.

The river north of it becomes more and more beautiful. The ridges of Dartmoor on the right and the moors of Hingston on the Cornish side begin to make their mighty

Plymouth Hoe

Plymouth—The Guildhall

influence felt. At Landulph, on the western bank, lies the body of Theodore Paleologus, who claimed to be descended from one of the last Byzantine Emperors. Just opposite Landulph is Warleigh Point, where the Tavy joins the

SALTASH BRIDGE

Tamar. Above this the Tamar narrows suddenly and soon makes a great loop at Pentillie Castle, behind which is Mount Ararat, where an eccentric Tillie commanded a statue of himself sitting in a chair before a table to be set. There are high rocks and hills on both sides here until we reach Cotehele House, a Tudor castle built in a quadrangle and set in a fine forest.

It is most emphatically a house to visit, for here remain all the old armour, tapestry, oak chairs and aged beds, vessels of china and earthenware exactly as they used to be in those far-off days when Sir Richard Edgcumbe pursued by Sir Henry Trenoweth, hidden high above the water, dropped his cap with a big stone inside it into the river below. The ruse succeeded, and he escaped to the Continent to return under the banner of Henry VII when he, in turn, with more success, hunted his old enemy, Trenoweth. One of the ladies of this family forestalled a thieving sexton

who sought to remove her jewellery from her body after death by sitting upright on her bier.

The Tamar now twists and winds about Calstock, where the hills are wooded and the river valley becomes more and more attractive until we reach Morwell Rocks which rise 300 feet above the water. Close by are Morwell Abbey and Weir Head, from which place it is only a short walk to Gunnislake and Tavistock.

East of Plymouth, Plympton is worth a visit as the birthplace of Sir Joshua Reynolds. The Roman Ridgeway passes through Plympton St. Mary, the church tower of which is in keeping with the rest of the building, both massive and noble.

Borringdon is a sixteenth-century house, and together with Saltram, a very large mansion, belongs to the Earl of Morley. The Strodes had a house here called Old Newnham with extraordinary chimneys.

Plympton St. Maurice was once a Stannary town with a castle and a fifteenth-century church, with a good screen, containing a memorial to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and another to his father, who was the village schoolmaster. Three miles further north is Plymbridge at the southern end of the Bickleigh Vale, which is not unlike the Teign Valley at Fingle. Here are ferns and bracken and trees fringing the Plym river. Bickleigh church contains the helmet and gauntlets of Sir Nicholas Slanning, "one of the four wheels of Charles's wain," killed in the Civil War. Shaugh Bridge marks where the Meavy and Cad join to form the Plym.

We are now getting on to the wilder heights of the Dewerstone and Shaugh Beacon. Still further north is Buckland Monachorum, in which parish lies Buckland Abbey, founded in 1278 by the wife of Baldwin de Redvers, Earl of Devon. Henry VIII gave it to Richard Grenville and it was afterwards bought by Sir Francis Drake. There are still preserved in it the black-letter Bible which he took on all his voyages, his sword, and the drum which used to beat

River Tamar—Morwell Rocks

Plympton—School Arcade

to quarters on his ship *Pelican*. The house now belongs to Lord Seaton. In Meavy church is the mortuary chapel of the Drake family, and there is an oak, twenty-five feet in circumference, by the lych-gate, which is supposed to have been planted in Saxon times. Inside its hollow base nine people once dined together.

Visitors to Plymouth who explore this wooded valley should extend their journey by taking the railway to Yelverton, which stands 600 feet above sea-level, and makes a good centre for moorland walks, to Dousland, which is more primitive, as becomes a village nearer the actual moor, and of course to Princetown. It is said that there is something a little undignified about arriving in the very heart of the wild moor by train, but for those for whom, through ill-health or laziness, a walk of thirty miles is out of the question, a very fair impression of Dartmoor's grandeur can be got by looking out of the carriage window as the train winds and climbs round these great tors. From the point of view of scenic effects there is no railway journey in England to compare with that between Plymouth and Princetown.

SHAUGH PRIOR, NEAR YELVERTON

The most popular excursion by steamer is that to the Eddystone Lighthouse, fourteen miles out at sea, past the wooded park of Mount Edgcumbe, Cawsand beach, in the inn of which Nelson

danced while his fleet lay in the bay, Kingsand, the home of smugglers, and last of all Rame Head, western guardian of the Sound.

As we round Rame Head we look longingly at

YELVERTON—ROBOROUGH ROCK

the long strip of sand at Whitsand, and the harbour of East and West Looe, but that is the alien soil of Cornwall. Our way lies ahead. The lighthouse, which is visible on most days all the way, is the fourth to be built among these isolated boulders. The first man to attempt this engineering feat was Henry Winstanley in 1696. He was captured by a French privateer and his men turned adrift. He was eventually released, and the building was completed in 1698, and looked partly like a pagoda and partly like a church, with cranes and platforms jutting out from every crevice. Winstanley was so certain of its stability that he made a special voyage to it on the day of one of the worst storms ever encountered. This was in 1703. After the storm had subsided nothing was left of Winstanley or his lighthouse except one link of iron.

A mercer called Rudyerd built a wooden lighthouse

The Moors near Dousland

Newton Ferrers

in 1709, which was destroyed not by wind and water but by fire fifty years later, one of the keepers swallowing half a pound of molten lead before going mad. Smeaton's lighthouse was finished in 1759. This time it was the rock and not the lighthouse that showed signs of collapse. The modern one, costing £80,000, stands 130 feet high, and was finished forty-five years ago.

As we are not allowed in a Devonian tour to take the steamer westwards to Looe and Fowey, we are left with one maritime excursion eastwards, which is at least as lovely and much less well known. Who knows, other than from a distance, the Mewstone off Wembury, that strange mass of dark rock, a mile off the beach, once inhabited by a man and his wife who looked after the Calmady rabbits? Wembury itself consists of a church, a farm, and a mill, clustered together above a lovely bay where the grass stops abruptly above rocks of red and blue and grey and black, looking on to golden sand. Wembury has in its day seen history made, for it was here that Ceorl, Ealdorman of Devon, fought against the Danes in 851, "made great slaughter and got the victory." No wonder the men of Devon fought so valiantly to preserve this mouth of the Yealm. At its mouth, at any rate, it is as lovely as the Dart.

The great mansion that so excited Risdon, the historian, has disappeared, but the villages of Newton Ferrers and Noss Mayo on opposite sides, with their gabled houses, trees, wharves, and fishing smacks all tumbled together are infinitely alluring, and no one will be willing to explore the coast until he has first penetrated the estuary up to Yealmpton and Brixton.

At Radford, just inland, Sir Walter Ralegh was imprisoned after his return from the Orinoco. The sea-coast between the mouth of the Yealm and the mouth of the Erme seems to be shared between Lord Revelstoke and Lord Mildmay of Flete, both of whom own houses hereabouts. The cliff scenery is extremely good, there is

an ivy-covered ruined church on the edge of the cliffs at Revelstoke, and a long private drive (which walkers are encouraged to use) all along the edge of the coast which is much appreciated by those who are tired of rough scrambling.

The Erme is a wooded but desolate river with a ford across from Mothecombe to Wonwell Court, whence we climb through high banked lanes to Kingston, where you may get tea at the Sloop Inn or wander on to Ringmore to admire the courage of William Lane. This one-time rector was a famous Royalist who trained his villagers to attack the Roundheads and was hidden for three months by his parishioners in a secret room in the church tower before he escaped to France. He afterwards returned to work in the Torquay quarries until his house was sacked by French privateers.

As we are now practically at Bigbury, and therefore well in the South Hams territory, we must retreat from this rocky coast up the wooded valley of the Erme to Holbeton, which has a fine cruciform church. Everything here is overshadowed by the mighty house of Flete, once the home of Damerells, then of Heles, now of Lord Mildmay. Oldaport, on the other side of the water, has queer remains of walls and round towers, thought to be Roman.

REVELSTOKE CHURCH
NEAR NOSS MAYO

It is very well worth exploring the valley of the Erme past Ermington, with its twisted

spire, to Ivybridge where the river runs its course through forests of ferns, over gigantic boulders, up to Harford, the birthplace of Prideaux, Bishop of Worcester, and across the moor to rejoin the Yealm at Cornwood where the river at Hawns and Dendles flows in a series of miniature cascades. We are now right in the middle of the prehistoric hut-circle area of the south-western part of Dartmoor, and without trespassing on the Dartmoor area proper we may spend days up on these heights between Cholwick Town and Shaugh Prior, examining kistvaens, stone avenues, and river-heads, and yet always be within sight and easy reach of Plymouth.

This then is the reason for Plymouth's appeal to the visitors of to-day. Nownere else can he get quite so many estuaries of such beauty, no other seaport is within an easy walk of the moor, from no other place is he so near to the rich cultivated woody inland valleys or rugged coast of the South Hams.

Plymouth the "centre of a hundred tours"? More nearly a thousand!

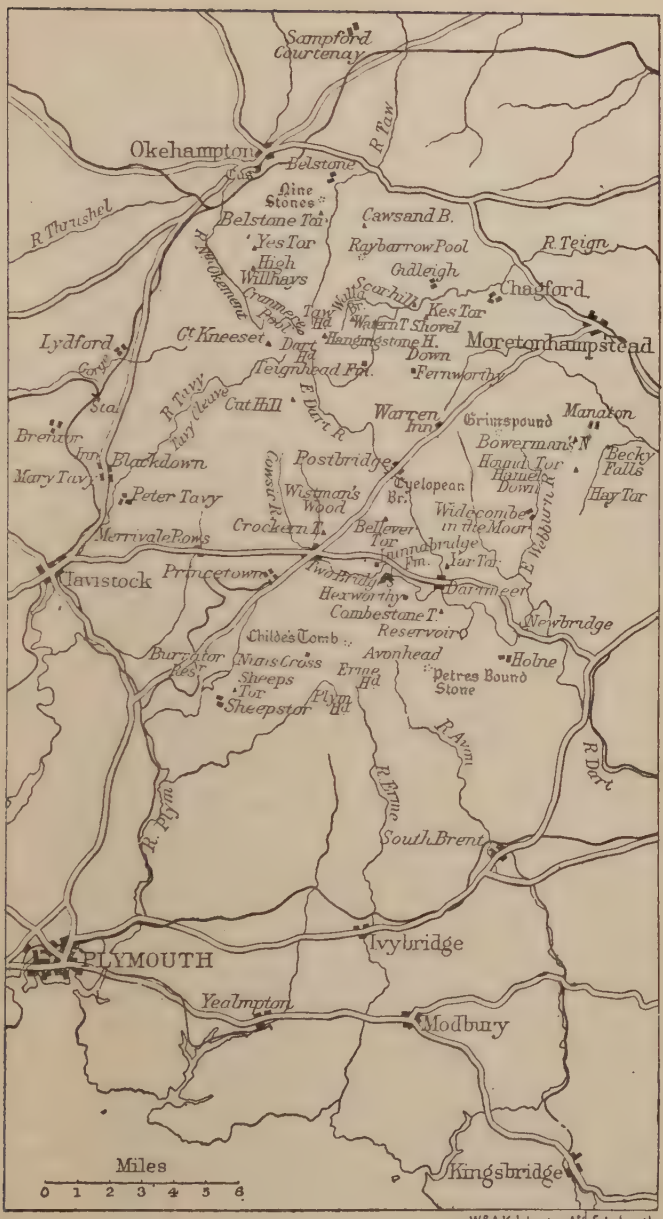
CHAPTER VI

DARTMOOR

FEW people pretend to a knowledge of the National Gallery's chief treasures after one hurried visit of an hour, but hosts of motorists, for some inexplicable reason, really believe that they have exhausted the delights of Dartmoor after crossing it at fifty miles an hour from Moretonhampstead to Princetown. That there should be two highly picturesque interesting roads across the moor has gone, paradoxically, some way to prevent numbers of people from ever getting, except in the literal sense, anywhere near Dartmoor at all. The only man who can be said to be even beginning to know the moor is he who has actually penetrated to Cranmere Pool from at least three sides of the moor, or been honourably defeated in the attempt not less than half a dozen times. It isn't that there is anything to see at Cranmere. There isn't. Its one virtue lies in the fact that it is difficult to reach except from Okehampton. It is supposed to be the fountain-head of five rivers, the Tavy, the Teign, and the Dart to the south, and the Taw and Okement to the north. In point of fact it is the actual source of only the last-named, which is also the least known of these. The only way to distinguish it from a thousand other black peat pools is to look for a pole at the base of which is an aluminium tin buried in the turf. This tin contains letters, a die with which to stamp them, and a book into which to enter your name and comments. You are expected to take out all the letters you find bearing the postmark of the previous

Bellever Tor, Dartmoor

View from Hound Tor



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day and post them when you reach a village, leaving your own contribution for the morrow's wanderer. You will be tempted, unless you are lucky, to enter a protest about litter in the visitors' book and then turn away from orange peel and broken bottles to some spot less obviously bearing evidence of popularity. This is easy. Within a hundred yards of Cranmere in any direction you will be able, if you lie down and give yourself up to it, to realise something of what the moor really is like.

In the first place, it is untracked. You have, as guides, only the sun, the shapes of the tors, and the deep ravines which mark the paths of the rivers. As the chances of your being completely and quite suddenly enveloped in mist are considerable, it is at once obvious that your risk of getting lost is also considerable unless you are armed with a compass. Even in ideal weather jumping from one tussock of heather to another into black peat or green bog is tiring, but when you are enshrouded in wet clinging mist you don't realise that you are in the bog danger zone until you start to sink.

It is the fashion of the times to dismiss Cranmere with a sneer, and on a fine summer day it is easy to laugh at the alarmist as one takes the pool in one's stride en route from Chagford to Tavistock, but it is very well worth while endeavouring to reach the pool on a stormy day, and at all seasons of the year if you want to soak yourself in the atmosphere of the true Dartmoor.

To be really lost in this area is worth while if only to make you share in some small degree the fear and veneration which the moorfolk feel for the old gods. There is something very mysterious in the eerie shapes of the vast masses of granite that form the many tors and the no less queer gigantic screes on their sides known locally as "clitters." This eeriness is accentuated by the lych or ancient trackways across which one stumbles, the stone rows, of which there are thirty-eight, long avenues of ancient stones usually leading from a stone circle containing

On the Okement

Grimspound, Dartmoor

a barrow with a kistvaen or stone coffin under the earth to a menhir, a single, upright stone. The row that leads to the Dancers on Stall Moor is two miles long.

The finest circles are at Scorhill (on the way to Cranmere from Chagford), and Fernworthy (on the way to Cranmere from Fernworthy). The highest menhir, 17 feet 10 inches long, is at Drizzlecombe. The best hut-circle is at Grimspound, which is bounded by walls about

POSTBRIDGE

four feet high and encloses twenty-four hut-circles within its four acres, where a prehistoric village of the Early Bronze Period once stood.

The streams are crossed by ancient " clapper " bridges, huge flat slabs of granite, supported by thicker slabs, that have been in position from time immemorial. Old ruined blowing houses remind the wanderer of the tin-smelting days when miners held their own Stannary Parliament on Crockern Tor round a large granite slab which may still be seen at Dunnabridge Farm.

The moorfolk still hold " venville " rights over the forest which enables them to pasture their cattle, sheep, and ponies, cut turf, and take away sand and stones in return for assisting at the " drifts," a process of rounding-up the ponies. All these evidences of an ancient history are no more to be seen or sensed by the man who keeps

to the high-road than are the pixies whose goodwill is invoked by the farmer's offering of a bowl of milk and the visitor's token of silver coins thrown over the shoulder into the fairy ring, stone circle, or at the foot of the granite cross.

To get into touch with the real Dartmoor you have to walk. It is a tract of open undulating country, treeless except on its fringes, where it is densely wooded, containing in all about 200 square miles, of which 100,000 acres stand over a thousand feet high. Its contours are as varied and as lovely as its colours. Looked at from a distance, it seems a magic land. Looked at from the closest possible quarters it definitely becomes one. It is only when you skim lightly across it that it entirely evades you.

There are not many places left where we can still get into touch with the early Celts or detect traces of the late Ivernians. Dartmoor is one of these places. Here we can see the actual fireplaces and stone seats that they used, pick up their arrow-heads of flint and wonder at the meaning of mysterious polished pebbles and the thick charcoal deposits in the stone circles. On these lonely heights it becomes less easy to sneer at the existence of Pixies who " mislead night wanderers, laughing at their harm." To avoid being Pixy-led is easy. You merely have to turn your coat inside out. If you believe in their puckish power enough to propitiate them to this extent you will be safe. Pixies or no pixies, the man who regards himself as infallible with maps will return from a week's wandering over the moor in a very different state of mind. It isn't only horses who have trembled and sweated with fear in the neighbourhood

FERNWORTHY STONE CIRCLE
NEAR CHAGFORD

Chagford

Becky Falls

of Cranmere. I have seen dogs do the same. Perhaps they have heard or scented the black Whisht Hounds rushing to and fro on their fell work.

He then who would wrest from the moor some of her secrets, and be invested with some of her glamour, must make his headquarters as near to her centre as possible, so that he may be in attendance in all her moods, in the dying light and at dawn as well as at noon.

There are many such places, as picturesque as they are convenient, but of them all I like Chagford best. It is a white shining village nestling on the side of a furze-clad knoll, with the Teign at its loveliest winding its way through the woods and meadows at its feet, and the great moor forming what looks like a high impassable barrier on the west. It was in the porch of the grey mullioned granite Three Crowns Inn here that young Sidney Godolphin was killed during the Civil War. The church, which is flanked by a great rookery, is of Dartmoor granite, and is spacious, simple, and majestic. Narrow lanes lead off in all directions, and whichever you take you come on a fresh delight. There are quiet bathing pools under shady trees all along the amber-coloured Teign; there are dense woods on steep slopes through which streams tumble over granite boulders; wooden mill-wheels still churn the water musically in the valley, and on the high slopes the white farms give evidence of man's endeavour to tame the moor's fringes.

The most exciting and most arduous way of reaching the moor is to follow the actual bed of the Teign, jumping from boulder to boulder with frequent immersion in its deep black pools, with the high rocks on either side becoming more and more precipitous until you emerge at Scorhill on to the open treeless moorland at what is perhaps the richest of all areas in prehistoric remains. Here are stone circles, hut-circles, a tolmen stone through which you can wriggle, kistvaens, clapper bridges, and

stone avenues in such profusion that the wise man will decide to leave Cranmere for another day.

The winding Wallabrook with its countless boggy tributaries, its choir of curlew in the spring, shaggy, small, inquisitive Highland cattle browsing on its banks, and shoals of fish darting to and fro in the clear peat water, offer enough attractions by itself to hold you back for one day. On another you will find it impossible to tear yourself away from the treasures of Shovel Down and the crown of Kes Tor on which you may lie in the sun and learn to

KES TOR, NEAR CHAGFORD

know the other tors by their shapes, a most important preliminary to moor-wandering.

One day, soon or late, you will succumb to the temptation to plunge across those lonely westward slopes and penetrate to Cranmere. The distance is scarcely worth considering. As you stand on Kes Tor you look across the untracked valley where the sun lights up odd pools in the North Teign to the rugged clitter of rocks on Water Tor. Beyond that lies a dip where the Wallabrook rises, and beyond that Hangingstone Hill (where you reach the 2000 foot level) stands on guard over Taw Head, Dart Head, and Cranmere. It is not more than five miles, but they can be the worst five miles you'll meet with in England. On a hot day the sun beats down mercilessly on these shadeless wastes. On a cold day the wind seems

to penetrate your body through and through. On a rainy day, and rainy days are not uncommon, the odds are very much on your losing your way. The rain penetrates no less quickly, no less surely than the wind, and with the rain comes a white mist that obliterates all landmarks. All the moor becomes a sodden mass of deep peat cuttings. The chances of falling into a mire increase, but the fear of that is completely outweighed by the fear of being lost. If this happens the only alternatives are to stay where you are until the fog lifts, which on a cold day, when one is wet to the skin, invites pneumonia, or to find a stream and follow it. It may take you miles out of your way and finish up on the other side of the moor, but it is at any rate bound to lead to civilisation in the end. Rivers may meander and wind without apparent direction, but they do not run in complete circles as a man who is lost often does.

All this may sound to you a good reason for not visiting Cranmere. I am, however, merely trying to emphasise the fact that there are easier walks, and those who find themselves tired after a walk from the Round Pond to the Serpentine are not recommended to do more than try their skill at finding Kes Tor's Round Pond on reaching Chagford.

BEE TOR CROSS, NEAR CHAGFORD

The reward for undertaking the Cranmere walk is, however, out of all proportion to its difficulty. Cranmere, if nothing more than a rough high tableland in which the inconsiderable dried-up pool

stands yet strikes a note of wild grandeur that it is impossible to get anywhere else. Look where you will, north, south, east, or west, you will see no trace of human habitation, no human road or track. All is as it has always been. Its inhumanity is more than a little awe-inspiring. In a severe storm one feels the insignificance of man at least as much as one does on the high mountains. No increase in height could increase one's sense of desolation. The sense of relief experienced on reaching Teignhead farm, the nearest house to the pool, after a big storm or being lost is not communicable in words. It is, perhaps, for this reason that I maintain that he who would know Dartmoor must first know Cranmere.

But there are delights of an ever-varying if less exciting kind to be got out of nibbling on its fringes. The most popular nibble is on the sector containing Hay Tor, from the top of which one can see not only scores of tors, but to the south the blue, much-wooded weald leading to the sea and, beyond the red roofs of Teignmouth, the blue glistening Channel itself. It is not easy to escape one's fellows on this most popular of rocks, but it is worth while joining them in their scramble to the summit in order to feel the power of the wind. However still and hot it may be in the valley, there is always a breeze rising to a gale on these rocks.

The temptation to climb all the neighbouring tors, particularly Hound Tor and Bowerman's Nose, ought not to be resisted, for they entail leaving the road, picking your own track, and leaving the crowd behind. You need never be afraid of having to share your moor with too great a number. Hay Tor may itself be black with people. It usually is. You can count on having Hound Tor to yourself before rejoining the multitude at Becky Falls, a once famous cascade over enormous boulders, and a still favourite place for picnics in spite of the fact that nearly all the water has been drained off for other purposes.

Near Becky is the village of Manaton, once the home of

Haytor Rocks, Dartmoor

Widecombe-in-the-Moor

John Galsworthy, once the possessor of an ancient granite cross round which the villagers used to carry all their dead three times the way of the sun before burial, in order to make it more difficult for the spirits of the departed to find their way back if they showed any such inclination. Manaton is an admirable centre from which to explore the moor, for it is both central and picturesque in itself. Its tree-fringed village green remains in the memory long after better-known beauty spots are forgotten.

If, however, you keep to the highway beyond Hay Tor you will be rewarded by a descent down one of the steepest hills in Devon into the village of Widecombe-in-the-moor, which always calls forth cries of disappointment from the stranger because he expects it to lie in a wild uncultivated bog instead of in a sheltered green valley. In point of fact it is one of the loveliest of villages, with an exquisite church tower standing 120 feet high above clustering cottages and their protecting trees. On October 21st, 1638, four people were killed and sixty-two injured during service by a thunderbolt, and the occasion is commemorated by verses inscribed on the church wall. Better known even than the church which gives, owing to its vast dimensions, a

BOWERMAN'S NOSE

cathedral-like impression, is the Fair, returning from which under her heavy load of eight, Tam Pearce's old mare "'er tuk zick an' died." No one now goes to the Fair, but there can be few Englishmen and no Devonians who do not know the song.

It is very much worth while striking up the East Webburn river at Widecombe, over the high hog's back of Hamel Down, and so on to Grimspound which is none too easy to locate, and thence to the Warren Inn on the main Moretonhampstead–Princetown road. It was in this inn, where the peat-fire is never allowed to be douted, that a traveller once discovered an embalmed body in a chest in his bedroom. It was, however, no hidden crime. It was merely "feythur." The ground was too hard, owing to frost, to dig a grave, so "us salted un down."

Like the "Cat and Fiddle" at Axe Edge, the Warren Inn is seldom unfrequented. Neither is architecturally striking, but each has been on countless occasions more welcome a sight than any pretentious hotel. To make this your headquarters in a good summer would be to ensure a real knowledge of the moor, for as soon as you leave the actual road you are on the untracked common. The only signs of human habitation are at Postbridge, about a mile along the western road where there is a chapel, another inn, and a few cottages set in a clump. The cyclopean bridge across the East Dart here is formed of four great granite slabs nearly fifty feet long. There are also traces of the original Fosse Way, and so many relics of antiquity that Postbridge is known as the Prehistoric Metropolis of Dartmoor.

Those who wish to make sure of getting to Cranmere, and are yet afraid of getting lost in the mists, should start from Postbridge, for it is impossible to lose your way, however bad the weather, so long as you follow the main channel of the East Dart which deviously but surely leads the wayfarer up the wild valley on the east of Cut Hill to within a stone's throw of the pool.

Princetown

River Dart near Holne

Quite apart from the triumph of reaching the pool, there is infinite enjoyment to be got from strolling along the banks of this most romantic of all Devon rivers in her early stages.

This river-bank should also be pursued southward, under the lee of Bellever Tor to the wooded base of Yar Tor, where you emerge at Dartmeet, where there are huge boulders in the deep wide water, a packhorse bridge, an admirably run tea-house picturesquely called Badger's Holt, a cave known as Pixy Holt, in which visitors are expected to drop a pin for the pixies, the Coffin Stone, where coffins were once rested on their way to Ashburton, and " Snaily " House, where two old women existed for years on a diet of snails.

Dartmeet is always a blaze of colour, a symphony of brown and gold. It is best seen, not from the close quarters of the bridge, where you will have eyes only for the bubbling musical stream, but from Combestone Tor, between the Forest Inn at Hexworthy and the Paignton reservoir at Holne.

From Combestone, which gives you a finer range of tors than any other viewpoint, you look down on the sinuous black snake-like course of both the East and the West Dart before they merge hundreds of feet below you in the broad shining river that is so soon to become the pride of South Devon.

Naked, bleak, and treeless is the path of the West Dart as you follow it up the stony valley with your eye to Two Bridges where the Cowsic river joins it. Away upon these distant heights can be seen the grim sinister prison, built in 1809, for French prisoners, and now used for English convicts. In all directions you will see ridge upon purple ridge, hazy and mysterious in the sunshine or capped with mist. The steep sides of the Dart valleys are all yellow with gorse and purple with heather.

As we wander on to Holne village, the birthplace of Charles Kingsley, high above the dense woods of Holne

Chase, we look down on the antique New Bridge far below in the valley, and thenceforward our interest lies in the Dart, no longer on the moor, so we wisely turn westward over the open moorland and by way of Petre's Bound Stone make for Avon or Aun Head, Plym Head, and Erme Head in order to trace all the great Devon rivers to their source. This is a land as rich in prehistoric remains as it is in bog. Ultimately this little known trek will lead you

HOLNE—CHARLES KINGSLEY'S BIRTHPLACE

to Sheeps Tor, where Sir James Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak, lies buried, and there is also a Pixies' Cave, which came in useful as a hiding-place for Royalists during the Civil War.

Having looked over into the deep waters of the Burrator reservoir which supplies Plymouth, you will probably decide to strike north towards Princetown in order to keep away from villages and roads, and if you are lucky you will find Nun's Cross, once the boundary of Earl Siward's lands in the days of Edward the Confessor, and at another period a guide-post on the ancient Abbot's Way.

Tavistock

Lydford Gorge

Still more interesting is Childe's Tomb, a kistvaen that recalls the story of Childe the Hunter, who, being lost in a snowstorm in Edward III's reign, killed his horse and crawled inside the carcase for warmth. He was, however, frozen to death, but before he died he scrawled his will in blood on a stone, leaving his priory of Plymstock to those who should bring him to his grave. He was discovered by the monks of Tavistock and buried by them, not without obstruction from the parishioners of Plymstock who tried to prevent them from carrying the body across the Tavy. "But they must rise betime, or rather, not go to bed at all, that will overreach monks in matters of profit."

Princetown is not a place one would choose to live in. It is grey, bleak, grim, and overshadowed by the prison. The church is ugly, and the churchyard possesses hideous reminders that even after death crime is not forgiven. The headstones of the many convicts who have died there are not happily conceived. On the other hand the prison influence does not extend far. Take the Tavistock road to the Merivale Rows, and you will soon forget the convicts in the joy of exploring kistvaens and cairns. Take the prison leat, a sort of toy canal running due north, and if you follow it long enough you will find yourself at Tavy Head, on the top of Cut Hill, within reasonable reach of Cranmere. So long as you keep to the leat side you cannot get lost, and as soon as

SHEEPS TOR,
THE CHURCH AND CROSS

you leave it at its source you ought to have got your bearings sufficiently to cover the rest of the journey without mishap. Turn east past Two Bridges and you can sit on the rocks at Crockern Tor where from Edward I's reign until the eighteenth century the tinners held their parliament. Wistman's Wood is close by, with its queer area of stunted primeval oaks, separated by huge granite slabs and fern-covered chasms.

The most profitable place to make for from Princetown is Tavistock, the birthplace of Sir Francis Drake, and of the poet William Browne, one of the Stannary towns, the home of the woollen industry, and the seat of a tenth-century monastery, burnt by the Danes, only to be rebuilt and wield enormous power for five hundred years. The church contains what are popularly believed to be the two enormous thigh bones of Ordulf, the son of the founder of the Abbey.

The neighbouring villages of Peter Tavy and Mary Tavy, where there are remains of extensive tin mines, have been excellently and lovingly described by John Trevena in his early novels.

Brentor is an imposing isolated knoll surmounted by a simple early English church with an embattled tower which can be seen from Cranmere. One family alone, that of Batten, exercise the right to be buried in its churchyard.

On the north side of Blackdown lies the Dartmoor Inn, where Salvation Yeo killed the King of the Gubbins, and an admirable starting-point for Cranmere by way of Great Kneeset, but before assaying that walk it is perhaps worth while to turn aside to see Lydford, the largest parish in England, containing 56,333 acres. The castle reminds us of Lydford law and the Stannary courts, for in its 16-feet square unlighted dungeon, reached only by ladder, prisoners were cast without trial and left to rot. Not without justice was it described as "one of the most heinous, contagious, and detestable places in the realm." Lydford Gorge, regarded from the bridge that spans it,

might be described in the same way. It is a narrow precipice with a stream flowing through it, once the haunt of the Gubbins. There are so many restrictions put in the way of exploring it that the wise tourist will be content to view it from the roadside and then continue his journey to Okehampton.

The difficulty about selecting Okehampton as one's centre from which to explore the moor is that the artillery have annexed this sector for gun practice from May to September. It is most famous for its "giglet" market, which takes place on the Saturday after Christmas and gives all men the right to introduce themselves to such maidens as they fancy and proclaim their desire to "walk out" with them from that date. John Trevena has also written ably about this district. Okehampton Castle is haunted by the ghost of Lady Howard, who murdered not less than two of her four husbands and wasted no affection on her daughter. She now spends her time in the shape of a hound carrying blades of grass from Okehampton to Tavistock. Above the station stands an antique cross marking the place where Fitz's Well once stood. To drink from this pool restored a sense of direction to the "pixy-led," and any maiden who drank there in the early hours of Easter Day thereby assured herself of a good husband within the year.

High Willhays (2039 ft.), the highest point of the moor, as well as the famous Yes Tor, are easily accessible, and there is actually a road practicable for motors over a greater part of the way to Cranmere. The loveliest part of this district, comparable with Tavy Cleave above Tavistock, lies on the south-eastern side of Okehampton, in Belstone's wooded cleave on the way to Belstone Tor, where seventeen blocks of upright granite, known as the Nine Stones, show what happens to girls who dance on Sundays. This district is particularly rich in prehistoric circles and remains of all sorts. Hereabouts is the exquisitely rounded slope of Cawsand (Cosdon) Beacon,

near which is the dreaded Raÿbarrow Pool, the most dangerous of all Dartmoor bogs.

From here we drop down again by easy stages to Gidleigh, where there is a picturesque church and a ruined castle, and find ourselves back in Chagford, having entirely encircled the moor as well as penetrated to its heart.

VIXEN TOR—DARTMOOR

Tavy Cleave

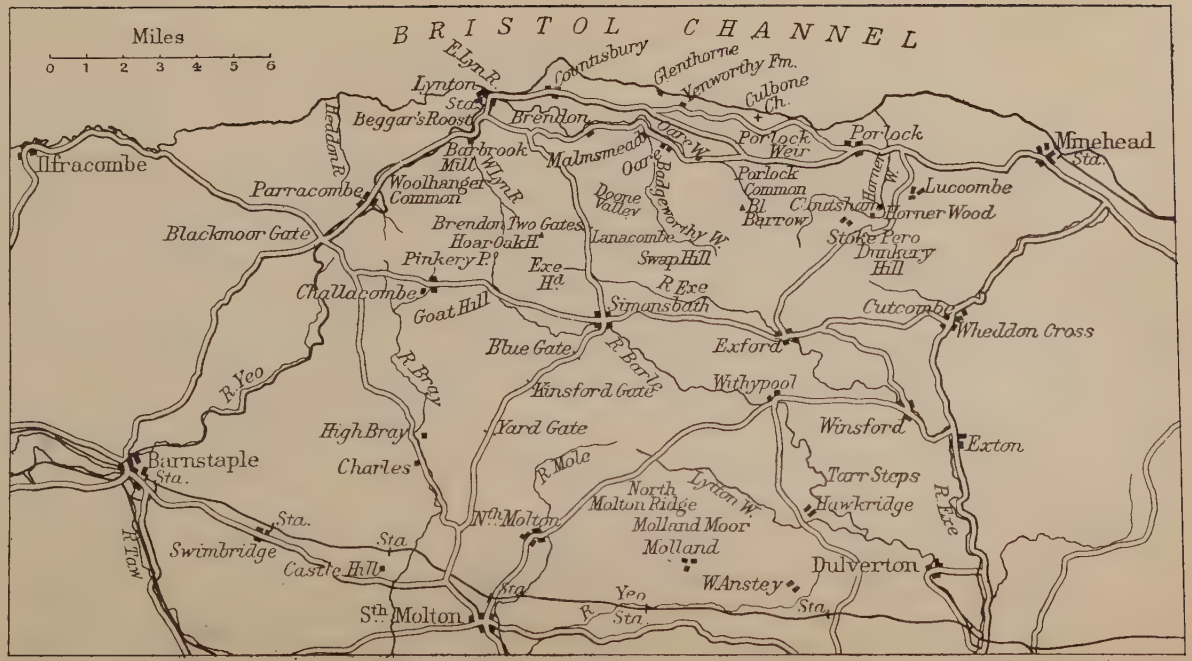
Meet of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds

CHAPTER VII

EXMOOR

NOTHING could well be more different from Dartmoor than Exmoor, but the way to get to know them is identically the same. It is just to encircle them like a child eating round the edge of a plate of hot rice pudding, and then to cut right through the heart of them by way of their rivers. Exmoor is longer than Dartmoor, stretching thirty-five miles from east to west, but it is narrower; its width is never more than twenty miles. It has little of Dartmoor's wildness, and no tors. Its compensations are the British Channel, which actually forms its northern boundary, and the fact that it is the home of the red deer. The Devon and Somerset Staghounds have hunted this area for three hundred years, and large fields turn out in August when there is no hunting to be had elsewhere. The procedure differs from that of fox-hunting, in that a harbourer goes out early in the morning to locate a stag and reports on finding to the master who selects half a dozen couples of tufters whose business it is to rouse the stag and get him to run. He is given a certain law, which perplexes those who are used to fox-hunting, and then the pack is laid on for a run which may end, after a twenty-mile chase, in the sea. Foot followers get a very good view owing to the open nature of the country and often manage by hard running to be in at the death.

The southern boundary of the moor is roughly the railway line running from Taunton to Barnstaple, and by the time we enter Devon it is possible to see from the carriage



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Oare Church and Valley, Exmoor

The Doone Valley, Exmoor

window some of the moor above West Anstey, where the railway joins the lovely valley of the Yeo. There are steep wooded ravines on either side, and the temptation to leave the train at South Molton should not be resisted, for it makes an admirable centre. South Molton itself is an old-world market town, with a fine church tower 140 feet high and a wide street.

Close by is Castle Hill, the seat of the Fortescues, a family which got its name from an ancestor who defended William the Conqueror with his shield at Hastings. The deer park is nearly a thousand acres in extent, and contains many bracken-covered knolls.

Swimbridge, the next village, was the home of Parson Jack Russell, who wore his hunting kit under his surplice in readiness for the chase. The screen, dated 1420, in the church is exquisitely carved, and the font is encased in wonderful old oak with a fine canopy.

The western boundary of Exmoor is the River Bray, which passes through the Fortescue estate and takes us, if we follow it north, through dense woods with steep hills running up eight or nine hundred feet on both sides. There are two picturesque villages on its banks, Charles, where R. D. Blackmore used to stay, and High Bray. North of this the scenery gets wilder and the river much less broad, until at Challacombe we emerge actually on the moor and find ourselves surrounded by many tumuli, a standing stone six feet high, and queer assortments of triangular and quadrangular stone formations. To keep fairly on the boundary instead of penetrating the moor here we make north-west for Blackmoor Gate, where the toy railway runs on its way to Lynton and forms the north-western boundary of Exmoor. Parracombe, at the head of the Heddon River, is in a dell with dangerously steep streets. We climb out of it on to Woolhanger Common only to drop down again to Barbrook Mill where is Beggar's Roost, a hill of 1 in 3½, well known to motor cyclists. The country just here is world-famous, for we are between

the West and East Lyn Rivers, and there are wooded glens and gorges on every side.

To get to the northern boundary of the moor we have to cross the East Lyn and climb to the top of Countisbury, which is a fine hill over a thousand feet high, standing right over the Channel. We here join the main Lynton–Minehead road and turn east along a highway which for the next twenty miles has not its equal in the British Isles. Below, a thousand feet on our left, lies the Bristol Channel with tiny steamers apparently motionless on its still blue surface. Beyond are the Welsh mountains, huge, rounded, and dim. On our right in a deep ravine is the valley of the East Lyn and Oare Water, and across the other side the whole expanse of Exmoor, ridge upon ridge of purple perfection. From here we can see eight counties, Devon, Somerset, Cornwall, Brecon, Carmarthen, Pembroke, Glamorgan, and Monmouth.

On the seaward side lie the woods of Glenthorne, clinging to the precipitous sides of the rocks. There are ferns and brambles and heather and great jagged boulders in endless profusion above and below the narrow cliff paths. Just beyond lies Yenworthy Farm, with the name-plate of the "Donna Maria" hanging in its dining-room, and that seven-foot flintlock used by Widow Fisher

PORLOCK CHURCH

View in East Lyn

Badgworthy Valley, Exmoor

against the Doones when they fired her ricks. Also in the woods is dark Culbone church, the dimensions of which are 33 feet by 12 feet 8 inches. It contains a Saxon window, square-headed and iron-barred. This wooded seaward cliff walk brings us out at Porlock Weir. The high road above us passes no village until it reaches Porlock, the north-eastern boundary of Exmoor, a superbly situated old-world village which was the scene of a frustrated invasion in 918 on the part of the Bretons and a successful one in 1018 on the part of Harold. The Ship Inn is famous for its associations with Coleridge, who was interrupted while writing "Kubla Khan" here, and with Wordsworth. The church was built in the thirteenth century by Sir Simon Fitz Roges, a crusader lord of the manor. There are two fine effigies of John Lord Harington in full armour, and Elizabeth Courtenay his wife, who lived in the reign of Henry V.

If we elect to take neither the cliff path nor the high road, we are left with a third parallel and most lovely walk by way of Brendon to Malmsmead and Oare, where the Snows used to live. The church is famous as the scene of Carver Doone's attempt on Lorna Doone's life during her wedding service. It is squat, half-hidden in trees, but has a pleasing tower. The walk up Badgworthy Water to the

PORLOCK—THE SHIP INN

Doone Valley has been undertaken by countless thousands, and it is the fashion to express disappointment with the valley. This is because Badgery (as it is pronounced) is in itself so beautiful that nothing coming after it could be anything but an anticlimax. The open moor lies on either side, the water is wide and clear, inviting one to drink, paddle, or bathe in its clean brown depths, and the track by its side is as springy to one's tread as the summit of the South Downs. The Doone Valley is just a tributary running off on one's right hand almost at the top of the valley, with no distinctive features, but leading on to the wild open moor and just the sort of place that outlaws might be expected to infest. The novelist is perfectly at liberty to let his imagination run riot in adding grandeur that exists only in his mind. He is so much the less a novelist if he transcribes only what he sees photographically.

Those who express disappointment at the lack of wildness in the Doone Valley should walk up to the top of Badgworthy, and then strike across Kittuck and Black Barrow to rejoin the road on Porlock Common. They will then have their full measure of rough going in the bog and heather of two ravines, which will, perhaps, come much nearer to their anticipation of the haunt of the Doones.

The eastern boundary of the moor is a line drawn due south of Porlock up through Horner Water or Luccombe, by way of Stoke Pero or Cloutsham Ball, over the top of Dunkery Hill (1708 feet high, the highest point on Exmoor) to join the Minehead–Dulverton road at Cutcombe. It makes a patriotic Devonian sad not to be able to claim this north-eastern corner of Exmoor for his own county. Truth to tell, by far the greater part of the moor is in Somerset, but just as the Devon and Somerset Staghounds do not split or stop hunting on the county boundary, so do writers, like the famous pack, tacitly agree to hunt it all and divide the spoils. I know no place in all England to compare for richness of scenery with Horner Wood.

One stands ankle-deep in whortleberries on its upland paths, and looks over gorse-covered knolls and deep wooded dells on every side. There are glimpses between the trees of the blue water of the Channel, and in the distance what look like clouds, but are, in point of fact, mountains.

Above, to the south, lies the purple rounded shoulder of Dunkery, from which fifteen counties are visible on a clear day, and on the lower slope of which, at Cloutsham, is held the opening meet of the staghounds. The eastern boundary is easily defined by a winding main road, which makes its way from Wheddon Cross past innumerable quarries, with steep woods on both sides, until it is joined by the tiny Exe at Exton and reaches the south-eastern corner of the moor at Dulverton.

Having now nibbled round its edges we are at liberty to explore the heart of Exmoor. Both the main Exmoor rivers pass close to Dulverton, and perhaps the best of all circular tours is to be got by tracing the Barle to its source and then coming home down the Exe. The wooded stretches of the brown Barle, past lovely Hawkridge, are known to all fishermen, for it is

DULVERTON

even more famous than the Otter, but archæologists also follow its winding banks to see Tarr Steps, a cyclopean bridge of unknown origin composed of twenty blocks raised three feet out of the water supporting massive flat granite slabs. But while the antiquarian wistfully searches for theories as to their history, the lover of beauty is content to stand on them and just let his eyes dwell on the exquisite combination of moorland, rich valley, woodland, and waterway. After a few more bends in the river we reach the tiny village of Withypool, which is as delightful as its name, and after that the trees become more sparse and the country opens out until we reach Simonsbath, the capital of the moor, a village of larches and firs, an admirable centre not only for anglers but for all walkers. It is from here that one realises how ridiculous it is to compare Dartmoor with Exmoor.

Simonsbath has infinite riches set in a little room. The cream of Exmoor can all be explored, and with very little difficulty, from its doors. Though you may encounter wild storms you will never run the same danger of getting lost that you do on Dartmoor. Dartmoor has no village in its very centre. It is too inhuman for that. Exmoor, whose spirit is more kindly, welcomes one. There are four roads running out of Simonsbath, and each one leads to a fresh fairyland. Our way lies straight on along the stony lane to Challacombe, below which runs the Barle, getting perceptibly narrower until at Goat Hill, where it passes underneath the road, it is a mere brook babbling over loose boulders on a treeless moor. We

VALLEY OF THE BARLE, NEAR SIMONSBATH

Tarr Steps, Dulverton

Simonsbath—Valley of the Barle

leave the road to follow it, and within a mile are at Pinkery Pond on Hoar Oak Hill, having triumphantly and very easily tracked it to its source.

Exe Head lies due east over untracked boggy moorland, the loneliness of which is accentuated by its one stunted oak tree. The great river actually rises one mile to the south of the tree, and then makes its way east under the road about a mile south of Brendon Two Gates, which is the county boundary, and meanders down a desolate ravine parallel with Haccombe Water to Exford. This is by far the best angle from which first to explore the Doone Valley, for the descent to it from Exe Head really is rough and not too easy to find, and you have the additional advantage of coming on the famous valley from the moor itself, instead of from the civilised and much-trodden way of Badgworthy. As Blackmore lived on this side it is obvious that this must have been the approach best known to him.

As you flounder about on these bog-ridden heights, and see deer no higher than the giant bracken peering out at you, some of the legends that you heard in childhood seem less improbable than they did in the security of Oare and Malmsmead, Exford, or Simonsbath. It is not so easy to be pixy-led as it is at Cranmere, but it wouldn't do to deny the pixies' power or their existence on Lanacombe or Swap Hill.

Re-read Whyte-Melville's "Katerfelto," re-read "Lorna Doone," and Fortescue's "Story of a Red Deer," and you will find three different entrancing angles from which to approach this really unknown tract of lovely country. Then come to it in person, and fish its waters from seven-bridged Winsford to Exford, from Dulverton to Simonsbath, ride to hounds or run to them on foot over moor and vale, and let Exmoor have her way with you. You will soon cease to worry about her minuteness. You will find enough variety, wealth of scenery, and occupation to make a holiday spent on it in every way memorable.

Having exhausted the charms of the Barle and the Exe and the moors above them, there remains on the southern side the country of Dane's Brook and Lytton Water, of Molland Moor and North Molton ridge, and the enchanting reaches of the River Mole, on whose banks lies the home of Tom Faggus, the highwayman, and a church and old mansion that even in Devon stand out as remarkable. Finally climb out of Simonsbath by the south-western road past the iron mine at Blue Gate above the Barle ravine, and stand at Kinsford Gate looking down through Yard Gate on to the rich blue weald of mid-Devon and the black tors of distant Dartmoor, and you will agree that scenery in other lands may rise perhaps to greater heights, but nothing more definitely satisfying to the æsthetic mind is likely to be found in an imperfect world.

Exe Valley at Lyncombe, near Exford

Lynton and Lynmouth

CHAPTER VIII

LYNTON, WESTWARDS

WHICHEVER way you approach the villages of Lynmouth and Lynton you are in for a surprise. If you come by steamer you find yourself transferred to a small boat, as at Clovelly, owing to the absence of a pier. If you come in by the toy railway you have climbed so high and curled about so much on the way from Barnstaple that you expect to fall headlong and giddy into the sea off the high rocks. If you come by the best way of all, by motor coach from Minehead, your head will have been so turned by the twenty miles of moorland and seascape that you will have no adjectives left for the steep hill that leads from Countisbury to Lynmouth. You find yourself standing over the Lyndale Bridge listening to the roar of the tumbling waters coming down the combe, and saying to yourself, "Havergal made a beautiful chant out of this melody." You turn and look at the houses growing out of the trees on the steep cliffs, at the jetty wall over which waxwork-like fishermen lean without expression or movement, and say to yourself, "Southey made a prose poem out of this." Then you console yourself for your lack of apt words to express your feelings by saying, "Honeymoon couples have come here in their hundreds of thousands and gone home knowing no more than that they have been in heaven."

Ordinary standards simply won't do to describe this corner of Devon. One realises dimly and dumbly that no other combe of one's acquaintance comes quite so

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Valley of Rocks, Lynton

Lee Bay and Abbey, near Lynton

obligingly near to the hotel door to show its beauty of wood or majesty of cliff.

In Elizabeth's day the natives had a flourishing herring industry, but the parson so vexed the poor fishermen for extra tithes that the fish, without warning, suddenly left the coast. At rare intervals large shoals have again appeared in the harbour. It must be for these that the fishermen stare out to sea day in, day out, throughout the year.

There is a lift to convey you up the five hundred feet hill that separates the tiny fishing village of Lynmouth from the new flourishing town of Lynton, which has to be passed in order to gain the Valley of Rocks, a place of jagged peaks on the north overlooking a green vale with a quite respectable mountain peak on the south. There are paths in and out among these Castle Rocks and Devil's Cheese-wrings where Mother Meldrum had her winter quarters. Every nook of these precipitous eyries is occupied on summer afternoons and evenings by girls and boys reading, talking, flirting, climbing, laughing, and chasing each other like butterflies. They have the unexpected effect of making the sea, where only the gulls and cormorants hold sway, even more awe-inspiring. There is a sheer drop into the sea of not much less than a thousand feet here.

LYNTON—CASTLE ROCK

To the west lies Lee Abbey, a sham antique set in a perfect valley, which is full of legends about the Wichehalse family, who have nothing of the Dutch in their blood,

LYNMOUTH—CHERRY BRIDGE, GLEN LYN

contrary to the general report, but are of ancient Devon breed.

In 1628, Hugh, frightened out of Barnstaple by the plague, came to live in the thatched manor house of Lee, and was buried in 1653, in Lynton church. It was his grandson, John, who started the Wichehalse curse. He gave information against Major Wade, a fugitive from Sedgemoor, who was being hidden by a farm woman

called Grace How. From that moment everything went wrong with the family, and the last one of the race, Mary, used to wander half-mad along the cliffs and eventually fell over. This is very different from the usual story of Jennifred, who, betrayed by Lord Amberly, threw herself from Duty Point. The White Lady that everybody sees is formed by the sky between two rocks.

If Lynton's pride is the Valley of Rocks, Lynmouth has something equally fair, if very different, in Watersmeet, which is reached by walking up the thickly-wooded valley of the East Lyn, a river overhung with enormous rocks on both sides, rising to a height of 800 feet. The water is unquiet and melodious, falling over weirs and cascades and boulders all the way.

Watersmeet is the junction of two brawling streams, under three mighty cliffs, so overhung with trees and ferns that the sun seldom penetrates except to the water itself. It is a paradise of green glades. The climb out of the valley to the quaint Blue Ball Inn, on the top of Countisbury, is steep, and the change from the stifling heat of the closed-in tropical valley to the clean windswept gorse-covered height of Countisbury Foreland is most welcome. A good route back to Lynmouth is to scramble down to bathe in the clear still waters off Sillery Sands.

The best way out of Lynmouth westward is not by way of Lynton, but by the North Walk, a narrow coast track cut high up on the seaward side of the Valley of Rocks. In a high wind this can be exciting. In point of fact, this coast track can be adhered to for the whole of that wonderful sixteen miles to Ilfracombe, but the wise wayfarer will leave it periodically to get a change from the serried ranges of rugged cliffs falling steeply that face him all the way. It is, for instance, well worth while climbing all the rocks hereabouts on the landward and the seaward side before descending to the green comfortable bowl that leads past Lee Abbey, first to Lee Bay, a perfect cove, and then to Wooda Bay, where there remain evidences of that

unlucky speculator's efforts to develop what certainly looks like a heaven for speculators, but, in this instance, ended in fraud and a prison.

Wooda Bay is, as one might expect, wooded. It is more than that. It is a tiny forest covering the whole of one wide and lovely bay. As you drive along its shady road and marvel at the quietude you can see neither houses nor sands nor waterfalls, though all are there.

The cliff track round Wringapeak, past the "Cow and Calf," to Heddon's Mouth comes as a relief to those who like sunshine and the ability to see their way. By this time you have got used to rugged scree and precipitous fanciful-shaped rocks, but as you stand on High Veer and suddenly look across that vast gully which is Heddon's Mouth you will acknowledge that for sheer majesty this remains supreme. Its limekilns at the mouth of the stream, that winds over boulders down the rugged ravine, add to its sombre effect. There is bathing to be had here before climbing up the valley, which is very like Badgeworthy Water, to tea at the Hunter's Inn. Let not the traveller, however, be diverted from the coast just here by roads, for the next piece of coast to Sherracombe is the wildest and least known of all.

LYNMOUTH—RUSTIC BRIDGE, GLEN LYN

Under Trentishoe and Holdstone Downs, on the top of which there are prehistoric barrows, we break our way through breast-high bracken half-way up

The Foreland, Lynmouth

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Glen Lyn, Lynmouth

the perilous cliff. Below are no sands, nothing but jagged rocks with the Mare and Colt sticking out most prominently from scores of less distinguished crags.

At Sherracombe we cross another ravine as steep as Heddon's Mouth, with a waterfall at the end of it falling seventy feet over the cliffs. Here are nightjars and buzzards, kestrels and ravens. Great rocks impede our climb to the Great Hangman on the further side, a hill that got its name from " An-maen," and not from the sheepstealer who was reported to have been strangled by the rope which held his sheep on his back. On the sides of these hills you may penetrate the long disused tunnels of the silver mines before arriving at the farm of West Challacombe, where the once-famous Prouze coat-of-arms is cut in the porch, and the panels of the front door contain figures of a Stuart couple.

We are standing now above Combemartin, a village with the longest and hottest street in all Devon, lying as it does in a deep combe that stretches from Blackmoor Gate to the sea. To this place miners were brought, in Edward III's reign, from the High Peak and from Wales, and the silver thus obtained paid for the cost of the French wars.

In Queen Elizabeth's reign, Adrian Gilbert and Sir Beavois Bulmer revived the industry with great success. Floods occasionally destroyed the works, but sporadic efforts have often been made to start the mines again.

Combemartin takes its name from the " Sieur Martin de Turon," who was granted these lands by the Conqueror. The last of the Martins had a son who went off hunting one day, and as he had not returned by nightfall the drawbridge across the moat was raised. He then came home, fell in the moat, and was drowned. The manor house was thereafter abandoned by the family and taken over by the Leys, one of whom built that extraordinary house, now the King's Arms Inn, that is shaped like a pack of cards, and built as children build, tier upon tier, with fifty-two windows.

In spite of its excessive heat it is not a sleepy place; its strawberry gardens are world-famous, and it is now the Worthing of the west. Its church is one of the finest in all Devon, with a huge grey tower 100 feet high, wagon roof, and fine effigy of Judith Hanwen in point lace and a pearl necklace, dated 1637. Marie Corelli's "The Mighty Atom" describes life in this village.

There are some glorious bathing coves, Wild Pear Beach under Little Hangman, and Sandy Bay on the west being the best.

Just over the hill overlooking the beautiful Sterridge Valley lies Berrynarbor, whose high tower stands embowered in tall trees, sentinel over as attractive a hamlet as one could wish. In this parish is Bowden, an old farm in which Bishop Jewell, the author of "Apologia Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ," which was once chained in all churches, was born. The manor house of Berry de Narbert has been dismantled, and the castle of Watermouth, standing above a tiny harbour of its own, is sham antique. Its gardens, however, more than compensate for its crude architecture.

The cliffs at this spot, for the first time along this coast, cease to be terrifying, but we are no sooner round Rillage Point than we look across Hele Bay to the giant sugar loaf of Hillsborough, which is Ilfracombe's crowning joy. Before, however, we come to rest at the most picturesque of all England's very popular seaside resorts, there is a deep lane inviting us inland from Hele Beach that we shall be unwise to resist.

Through rutty, muddy tracks overhung with elms, we come upon a white farm approached through a gateway in a cobbled courtyard. This is Chambercombe, the home at one time of the Champernownes, and still apparently haunted. In a room, long lost, a farmer unearthed mouldering tapestry, carved oak chairs, and a four-poster on which lay the bones of an ancient skeleton. There is a room shown as the haunted room which probably was once a hiding-

Woody Bay

Ilfracombe, from Hillsborough

place for priests or contraband, and there are ornamented plaster ceilings, the coat of arms of the Champernownes, stone-flagged rooms, and much talk of a subterranean passage. This all helps the visitor, who is now invited to use this ancient house as a tea place, to walk out the mile or so from the more garish delights of Ilfracombe.

COMBEMARTIN

CHAPTER IX

ILFRACOMBE, WESTWARDS

ILFRACOMBE, like Torquay, is attractive from whichever viewpoint you look at it. Like Torquay you can see it from a hundred different angles. As the train with full brakes on descends to it from Mortehoe, you realise that their failure would send you hurtling into the sea. It looks as if it had no history, but it is deceptive in that as in many other things. The Saxons knew it as Alfreincombe. By the time of Edward III it was important and patriotic enough to supply a contingent of six ships and ninety-six seamen to the Calais Expedition. In the Civil War, after one abortive invasion, Sir Francis Doddington captured it for the King. There is an interesting bathing cove called Rapparee, which is supposed to derive its name from the Earl of Tyrone's rebellion in Ireland when the rebels armed themselves with pikes known as "raparys." Fugitives from Ireland would naturally make for North Devon, and the annual hunting of the Earl of Rone at Combemartin suggests an Irish origin.

In the summer it is none too easy to thread one's way through the narrow main street owing to the traffic and numbers of visitors, but elsewhere there is always room. Some elect to burrow through a tunnel and bathe in a specially built pool, others will lie at their ease on the grassy surface of that vast rock known as the Capstone; there will always be many, boys and girls principally, clambering over the rocks looking for prawns or investigating the strange vessels in the harbour. The more energetic have

Ilfracombe—Lantern Hill and Hillsborough

Ilfracombe—The Harbour

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an infinite choice of cliff walks round the tors, slopes of heather and gorse, bracken, and ferns. In the old church are thirteenth-century stone corbels in the wagon roof, showing the lean cow, Chichevache in a sorry condition because her only diet was good women, and the fat cow, Bycorn, who did not find it hard to secure her provender of good and long-suffering husbands.

The first obvious excursion from Ilfracombe is by steamer to Lundy, the island of puffins, that lies twenty-three miles away to the north-west. If the day is clear you can see her lighthouses and houses with the naked eye, while on another day nothing is to be seen at all. The island is three and a half miles long, and nearly a mile broad, and is mainly composed of extremely rugged cliffs, the dread of sailors and the paradise of sea birds. It was known to the Welsh as Caer Sidi, the Fortress of the Fairies. In 1199 King John gave it to the Knights Templars contrary to the wishes of William de Marisco, who turned pirate and had no difficulty in retaining possession of what after all was his property. Outlawed himself he set out to rob man by sea and land. In 1242 he was executed on Tower Hill in a singularly brutal manner. Mariscos, however, continued to rule until Edward II granted it to a Despenser, and in time of trouble sought himself to take refuge there. It was then occupied by foreign pirates until the men of Clovelly, in the reign of Henry VIII, made a successful onslaught on the foreigners and burnt them out. Some years later the men of Barnstaple were called upon to take similar measures with similar results.

In 1652 three Turkish ships landed there and carried off the inhabitants as slaves. In 1633 the Spaniards repeated the experiment. In the reign of William and Mary the French attempted a raid on it. In 1748 a Bideford merchant, Thomas Benson, leased the island from Lord Gower, and contracting with the Government to take convicts to Virginia conceived the clever and time-solving

plan of landing them on Lundy. He became member of parliament for Barnstaple, but was ultimately fined £5000 for hiding contraband and breaking contracts.

In 1780 Sir John Berlase Warren bought it in order to colonise it with Irish. In 1803 it was sold for £700. By the time it passed into the hands of the Heavens its value had risen to seven times that amount. In 1906 H.M.S. *Montagu* ran aground on the Shutter Rock, where *Santa Catherina* sank centuries before, baulking Amyas Leigh of his revenge.

The principal objects of interest to-day are the puffins and the queer-shaped rocks, the most interesting of which is the Devil's Lime Kiln, a gloomy cleft nearly 400 feet deep into which the natives say the Shutter Rock would exactly fit. There is a tunnel underneath one of the rocks

LEE—SWISS COTTAGE

800 feet long and 60 feet high. But as one wanders about the granite fastness, 400 feet above the sea, it is not of the rare peregrine or the bird-like Slipper rock that one is thinking. It is rather of those sailors, who, landing, asked for milk for their sick captain daily until later they begged permission to bury him in the presence

of all the islanders. Having got them outside the church the sailors then requested the inhabitants to stay there while they took the coffin inside. The coffin was then taken into the church, opened, and with the arms that it contained, the sailors dashed out and despoiled the islanders Thus was the story of the Trojan horse put to good use by some French reader of the classics in the sixteen-'nineties.

West of Ilfracombe there is a fine cliff walk to the village of Lee, the home of the Drakes and the Cutcliffes, a very much protected valley full of fuchsias and white cottages with a tiny rocky bay just beyond what was once the lawn of the Manor House. The lane leading out of it is steep with high banks, and leads, if you keep to the left, to two grey ancient farms, Warcombe and Damage, where you may be privileged to enjoy a real Devon farmhouse tea with clotted cream as yellow as saffron.

If you keep to the right you find yourself in bracken-covered combes leading to Bull Point Lighthouse, and beyond that to the sands of Rockham immediately below Mortehoe, a fine rugged village with a twelfth-century church possessing good pew-ends and a tomb of William Tracy, rector here from 1257 to 1322, which is a long time but not long enough to make us believe that he was the same Tracy who killed Thomas à Becket 146 years earlier. The rectory is said to be haunted, but not, I think, by one of the woeful family.

Mortehoe was the headquarters of the wreckers who used to lure sailors to steer their ships on to the rocks, then murder them as they were washed ashore, and wait for the booty to follow.

Morte Point is a headland covered with boulders and bracken fringed with small grey rocks. It is like a pocket edition of Gurnard's Head.

There is a steep road leading from grey Mortehoe, which has a grim dignity of its own, to Woolacombe, which

Lee Point, near Ilfracombe

Mortehoe—Morte Point and Rockham Bay

is an entirely new and comfortable holiday place standing at one end of one of the finest stretches of sand in the country. Here, if anywhere in Devon, is the children's paradise. There are sandhills at the back, prawning pools in the low rocks over which the sea comes at high tide, and wide sands hard enough for cricket and tennis. The green Atlantic breakers give one a chance to ride the

MORTEHOE CHURCH

surf on boards. Perhaps, best of all, better even than those gallops over the sands on Mrs. Watts's donkeys, are the shells in Barricane Beach, of all colours, of all shapes, infinitely delicate, of infinite allure.

There is a cliff road under the moor to take us along the bay if we dislike sand, and a golf course below that in the sandhills full of hazards, but whichever way we choose we cannot fail to be struck along this three-mile stretch by the multitude and variety of sea birds and the splendid isolation. Woolacombe Sands will never be crowded, cram they Boy Scouts' and Girl Guides' camps never so thickly along its fringe.

The southern end of the bay is called Putsborough, which consists in the main of a low thatched manor-house encircled by trees just out of sight of the shore.

The nearest village is Georgeham, a mile up the hill, completely hidden from view. Here there is a fine church tower, an effigy of Sir Mauger St. Aubyn, who died in

1293, a monument to the Chichesters, and the graves of Simon Gould and his wife who died after seventy-five years of married life, at the age of 107.

The headland known as Baggy is of exceptional beauty, and should be fully explored. At the point, where the rocks fall three hundred feet, there is a vast cave in which seals can often be seen playing. Cormorants have annexed most of the abutting crags and buzzards wheel playfully above.

As we round the headland we come to another sandy bay at Croyde, an old-world village of thatched cottages with a stream running down its only street, separated from the sea by some fields and sandhills.

Round the next headland there is a vast waste of sands that make Woolacombe look tiny by comparison. This is Saunton, famous for its golf course, and the numbers of ships that have come to grief on these desolate shores. Their ribbed skeletons may still be seen. It was here that the Duke of Ripperda landed in 1728, a fugitive from Segovia, with no one but the lady who had procured his deliverance, and two servants. This strange Dutchman became in turn a Spanish duke, then a Moor, and died a Jew.

We resist the temptation to be lured on to these sands or to explore the vast desert of sandhills behind or even Braunton Great Field, but go in first to Braunton itself, the largest village in England. It was called after St. Brannock, the son of the King of Calabria, who 300 years after Christ came to the deserted Burrows, "took harts, which meekly obeyed the yoke, and made them a plow to draw timber thence, to build a church." He also had a cow which, after being killed and carved, came together again at the saint's word and went on grazing. He first built his church on a knoll above Braunton, but the Devil objected and kept on rolling the stones down the hill by night, so in the end he was shown in a dream a sow and her litter, and told to build on the spot where he found them.

Sea Fishing from the rocks, Mortehoe

Barricane Shell Beach, Woolacombe

The pig and her litter are carved in the boss of the present church, which is one of the most interesting in the county. Its bench-ends are very remarkable. Sir John Schorne, the rector of North Marston, Bucks, who pretended to have imprisoned the Devil in a boot in the thirteenth century, is depicted there; he kept up his imposture by fastening a spring to the bottom of a hunting-boot with a mechanical imp on the top, which sprang at all doubters. He is the father of "Jack-in-the-box." In the carving of him in Braunton the boot is replaced by a cup. There is a decorated Spanish chest with an unreadable inscription, and a palimpsest brass to Lady Elizabeth Bourchier, dated 1548. A stream running past the churchyard adds to the attractiveness of this village, which is at the foot of a wooded ravine leading up to West Down.

The great glory of Braunton lies not in the village, not even in the church, but in the Burrows, which are best reached from the village by way of the Pill, a tidal water running into the Taw, where ketches are to be seen left high and dry, stuck it would seem permanently in the mud.

There is a vast sea-wall here overgrown with grass, which runs alongside the Taw estuary, and on the landward side are innumerable dykes, decoy-ponds full of wild duck, fields full of cattle, and range upon range of great sandhills.

Here more than anywhere else in England it is worth while loitering to catch the note and watch the flight of hosts of birds hitherto unknown to us, to see at our feet a million wildflowers of a hue and scent unobtainable elsewhere. Here we enter upon wildness of another sort from that of high rock and deep ravine. Here is illimitable space, a waste of waters and of sand, a land that was once primeval forest.

At the junction of the Taw and Torridge we come to a sandy promontory covered with long green marram grass, where we may picnic and bathe with no human beings

nearer than the fishermen of Appledore and Instow across the water.

We may watch the fishing-smacks beating their way over the bar, the white breakers of which seem to form an impassable ridge for the fully-rigged barques and tugs that seek the high seas. There is a lighthouse here, and an iron skeleton tower a little further on.

It is by no means easy to get lost on Exmoor, but in a blinding sandstorm to plunge into these wild wastes is to make a good pretence of being in the Sahara. The wind has blown these towans into every sort of shape. Channels go off in every direction and one's trek is a long succession of running down steep slopes of sand and climbing up others without being able to get any real sense of direction. In any case direction matters but little when one hears the curlew or watches the ring-plover with their white underwings dart past in unending battalions.

Here grow in the most unlikely of all places blue borage, viper's bugloss, speedwell, wild pansies, wild thyme, club-rush saltwort, and stork's bill.

There are few better places than the Braunton Burrows for the man or woman who would like to know something about birds and flowers, and no book at once so simple and informative as Dr. F. R. Elliston-Wright's "Braunton: a few Nature Notes," which is, like the work of all original men of science, unassuming, modest, and straightforward. Discoveries that have cost years of patient investigation are baldly set down in a line. The visitor will find it worth while to spend at least the whole of one day merely wandering among the Burrows with this book in his hand. It will ensure his returning again and again.

Barnstaple

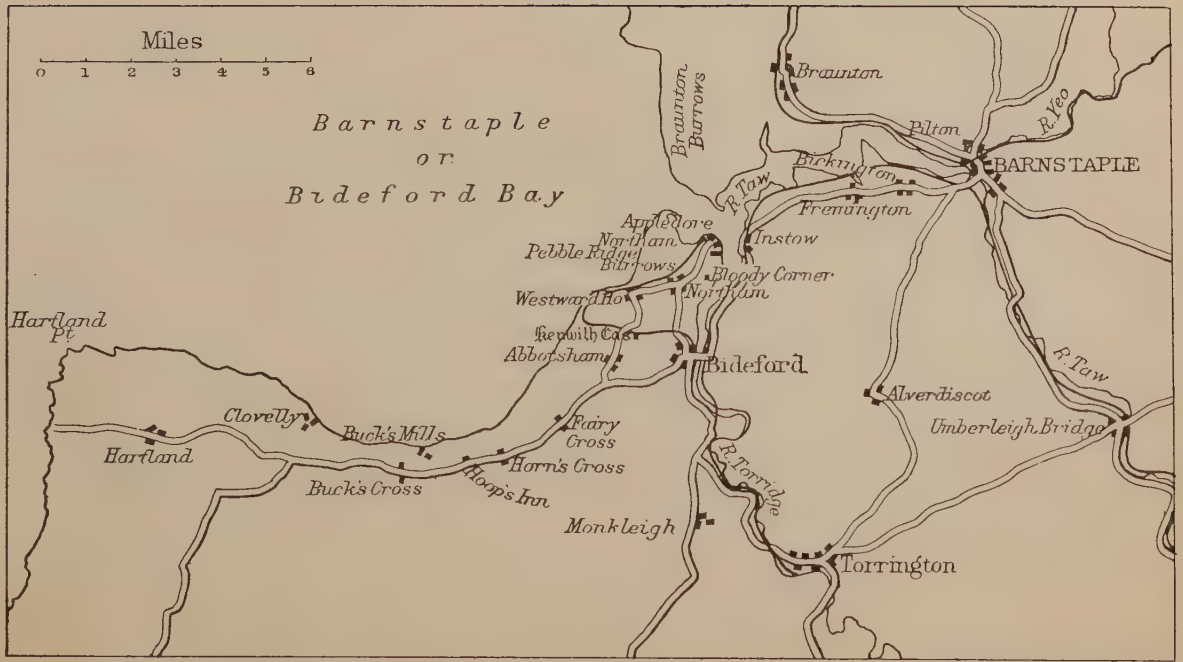
Barnstaple—Taw Vale Parade

CHAPTER X

BARNSTAPLE, WESTWARDS

BARNSTAPLE, so deceptive from the railway, is one of the most interesting towns in England. It was an important stronghold in Saxon times. Athelstan is supposed to have repaired its walls in 938. Judhail de Totenais, first lord of the manor in William's day, went on repairing them. It soon became famous for the manufacture of wool and kept on putting in claims for charters, all successful, from Henry II, Henry VI, and Henry VIII. It supplied several ships in 1346 for the siege of Calais and more at the time of the Armada. Elizabeth gave the borough two charters and James I two more. During the Civil War the town sided with the Roundheads, but changed hands four times. Charles II, at the age of fifteen, was sent here for safety's sake, and in due course gave the town another charter of which it seemed by that time to have a fair collection. The Huguenots, flying from France, were given a great welcome, and one of the families, St. Michel, had a daughter who at the age of fifteen married Samuel Pepys. John Gay, the author of "The Beggar's Opera," was born here, as was in a later day Hubert Bath, the musical composer, and "W. N. P. Barbellion," who was the son of a local journalist.

The first thing one notices about the town is the bridge, which was built in the thirteenth century, and possessed thirteen arches. This was the bridge from which Tom Faggus, on his "strawberry" horse, leapt in order to escape from the law. Signs of the prosperity of its wool



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merchants are to be seen in the richly-decorated ceilings to be found in antique shops and hotels. The most elaborate is in the "Golden Lion," which used to be the town house of the Bourchiers, Earls of Bath. Here are oak-panelled rooms and an exquisite ceiling, dated 1625, with the arms of the family and many Biblical subjects carved in the plaster. Elaborate carvings in stone, wood, and plaster are to be seen above the old fireplaces of many other Barnstaple houses and shops.

In Queen Anne's Walk, built in Charles II's reign, the merchants used to barter and bargain, and debts were paid

BARNSTAPLE—QUEEN ANNE'S WALK

on the Tome Stone which still remains. Coats of arms of the men who made Barnstaple famous are to be seen on the walls. The parish church is full of monuments to the wool merchants, and is remarkable for its twisted steeple, the lead of which is richly mixed with silver.

Pilton Church, dedicated in 1259, is more interesting, and contains a grinning head with a jester's cap as a stop to one of the window mouldings, a lovely fourteenth-century oak screen, and projecting from the pulpit a white arm of sheet-iron holds a Jacobean hour-glass. The cover and canopy over the font are very beautiful.

Barnstaple Market, held every Friday in a huge covered-in market of 45,000 square feet, is unlike any other in the Kingdom. Here sit old wives from the country behind

stalls covered with trussed chicken, bowls of cream, fruit, and vegetables, while their husbands buy and sell calves and pigs in the open market across the way. In September is held the annual Fair, which goes on for three days, and is one of the few where all the old-world side-shows are still given. There are platforms filled with psalm-singers cheek by jowl with palmists' caravans and peep-shows. Here are dwarfs, fat women, and marionette shows, as well as the ordinary merry-go-rounds and cock-shies. It is usual to get an attendance of 20,000 on one of the Fair days. Every village sends its contingent, and here you will see Devonians who emerge from their fastnesses at no other time.

To stroll along Taw Vale Parade, as is the custom of the young men and girls in the evening when work is over, and look out across the fields over the estuary is to summon up "a remembrance of things past." It was here that the old woman was drowned while trying to cross the ford before any bridge spanned the river; it was from here that the Barum Puritans, not content with holding their own against the King at home, set out for Torrington and came home victorious. It was here that four Ley boys, hauling ashore, in 1646, a bundle of rags, gave themselves and their townsmen plague. It was in these waters, as we read in "Mary Lee," the best novel ever written about Barnstaple, that the stern Plymouth Brethren were baptised by total immersion in the presence of thousands of their neighbours. From the dawn of time, when the Phœnicians came to the wattled huts then known as Artavia (Aber Taw), and bartered their eastern camphire for our western British tin, from the time when the Druids dwelt in the Valley of Rocks, and the smoke of sacrificial fires ascended from the Promontory of Hercules at Hartland Point, from the time when the dreaded Raven of Danish Hubba was seen to fly at the masthead of Viking ships off Appledore, and Odin, Earl of Devon, went forth to do battle and capture the magic standard, to the days of the wool

merchants, the sea captains, the rigid Calvinists, the Huguenots, and the Plymouth Brethren who still flourish, Barnstaple has preserved her individuality as few other English towns have. To adopt the phraseology of Master Wescote, who saw it in 1630, "For antiquity, fair buildings and frequency of people it may pass equal to some of greater fame." Like other places and people of marked individuality, her charms are not on the surface. The Roundheads did not "slight" her, but the modern visitors do.

On the way to Bideford we pass through two typical Devon whitewashed villages, Bickington and Fremington, on the south banks of the Taw estuary, with muddy creeks biting into the fields and stolid country houses standing in parks.

Soon we are in Instow, a jolly, unpretentious holiday place at the junction of the two rivers, with good sands, a little harbour, and ample opportunities for fishing and sailing. From Instow Quay the mails are taken in the sailing skiff *Gannet* to Lundy every Thursday. Here the houses on the water-side are grave and dignified. We see across the water the towans of the Braunton Burrows, Lundy, and almost within stone's-throw, easily within earshot of the ferry, old-world Appledore, and above it the tower known as Chanter's Folly.

Our road runs south down the eastern bank of the heavily-wooded Torridge, and soon we see Bideford's grey bridge of twenty-four arches, nearly 700 feet long, built on wool-sacks in the fifteenth century by a Grenville. The old Devon residents stick to Barum, the newly-retired Colonels settle in Bideford. It wears an air of gentility. There are many cars in its streets. The shoppers are always well-dressed.

The history of Bideford is the history of the Grenvilles. William Rufus gave the manor to Sir Richard, and it remained in the possession of the family for 700 years. In the church there is a fine monument to Sir Thomas, and a

brass in memory of that most heroic Sir Richard, who went down on *Revenge*. Probably the most eulogistic epitaph ever written is that to John Strange, mayor of the town, who died of the plague in 1646, after having completely exhausted himself trying to stop it. Bideford was the home of that famous Thomas Stucley, son of Oliver Cromwell's chaplain, who went mad through overmuch study. It was his delight during the Marlborough campaigns to make a plan of each battle by digging it out on his kitchen floor with a pickaxe. Each battle cost him a new floor. It was in Bideford churchyard that Sir William Coffin, in Henry VIII's reign, finding a disturbance, discovered that it was due to the rector's refusal to bury a corpse until he had been paid. He thereupon commanded the enraged people to bury the parson alive in the grave, for which he was arraigned before Parliament, and brought into being a new mortuary law.

There is an epitaph in the churchyard worth quoting :—

> "Here lies the body of Mary Sexton,
> Who pleased many a man, but ne'er vex't one,
> Not like the woman who lies under the next stone."

On the quay until recently, eight cannon, taken from the Spanish Armada, were used as mooring-posts for the ships. There are three more at Portledge and three at Clovelly.

In the Royal Hotel, built in 1608, they still show you the room where the merchants and sea captains used to gather in bygone days, and Charles Kingsley

BIDEFORD—KINGSLEY'S STATUE

Sunset at the mouth of the Taw and Torridge, Appledore

Westward Ho !

wrote " Westward Ho ! " surely the only classic novel to be written in an inn. The ceiling of this room, with its rich moulding of fruit and flowers, makes it look palatial, and not at all the sort of place one associates with the writing of novels. Looking down on the bridge all day the novelist was inspired to write a panegyric on its qualities as detailed and splendid as the epitaph on the heroic mayor. In his eyes it was inspired, soul-saving, alms-giving, educational, sentient, and dinner-giving. He forgot to add what strikes us most—patchwork. Its beauty is not impaired but rather enriched by the unevenness of its arches, and the fact that it is for ever being altered and widened.

Edward Capern, the postman-poet who was born in Tiverton, walked his thirteen miles a day for half a guinea a week pay as Bideford postman until he was granted a Civil List pension, and died at Heanton Punchardon in 1894, where his handbell still stands on his grave.

We now work north up the west bank of the Torridge to Northam, one of the most interesting places in the county, overlooking the Northam Burrows of a thousand acres, where grassland and furze are intersected by reed-fringed dykes over which the villagers have the right to graze cattle and to pasture geese. It is protected from the sea by the Pebble Ridge, which rises twenty feet above the beach, and is two miles long. In old days the " Pot-wallopers," those who had the pasturage rights, had to meet once a year and pile up the giant pebbles. Beyond is a submerged forest which has given up flints, bones, trees, and many other strange relics to museums. The pebbles are supposed to be bits of Hartland, torn off and rolled by the sea round the coves until they come to rest here. Kipling, who was at school here, has immortalised it in " Stalky and Co.," and the golf course, known as Westward Ho ! ranks with St. Andrews, though the Sauntonians across the water declare that theirs is better.

Burrough House, where Amyas Leigh lived, no longer stands, but Stephen and William Burroughs, natives of this area, are not yet forgotten. Stephen was master of the *Edward Bonaventure*, the first ship ever to sail into the White Sea, and in 1556 took a pinnace drawing only four feet of water into the Arctic, probably the most daring piece of exploring ever done, in his efforts to find a north-east passage to Cathay. He became Chief Pilot of England, and his brother, William, Comptroller of the Navy. Close by is Bloody Corner, where Hubba the Dane was killed together with 840 of his followers in 892. Bone Hill, where there is a cairn of sixty boulders commemorating Northam's mariner worthies, is supposed to be the burial-ground of the Danes. Northam church is grey and grim, and the interior admirably suits the village where so much history has been made.

Appledore lies at the northern extremity of this peninsula, and is a collection of narrow old-world fishermen's cottages leading down tiny cobbled streets to a succession of quays. It bears some resemblance to Mousehole, and is equally popular among artists. A flat rock near the quay, called the Hubba Stone, marks the burial-place of the Danish leader. Ships are repaired here, salmon and cod are caught in the estuary, " laver " is collected, and generally there is more industry than one would imagine on a quick visit. It looks, but by no means is, dead. Its name has nothing to do with apples. It is a corruption of " Aberdour," the water pool. It is very well worth making a detour westward over the Burrows and the Pebble Ridge, for though Westward Ho ! in itself wears a moribund look as a resort, the surrounding country teems with interest. The birds and flowers on this side, as is only to be expected, are as prolific as they are on those other Burrows just across the water.

We can continue our way to Clovelly all round the rocky coast if we so wish, but the mighty pebbles are very tiring after a time, and most people turn inland by way of

Hobby Drive, Clovelly

Clovelly

Abbotsham, where is an earthwork called Kenwith Castle. The Devonians took refuge here against Hubba, when he made his famous onslaught on this coast with a fleet of twenty-three ships only to be driven back and lose his magic Raven banner which flapped its wings before victory, but remained inert before defeat.

The church at Abbotsham is famous for its bench-ends and its six bells, one of which bears the inscription "lemosynary" nine times reversed. The main road passes Fairy Cross, Horn's Cross, and Hoop's Inn, a delightful old-world house full of antique furniture which makes the tourist feel as if he has been dropped into another century.

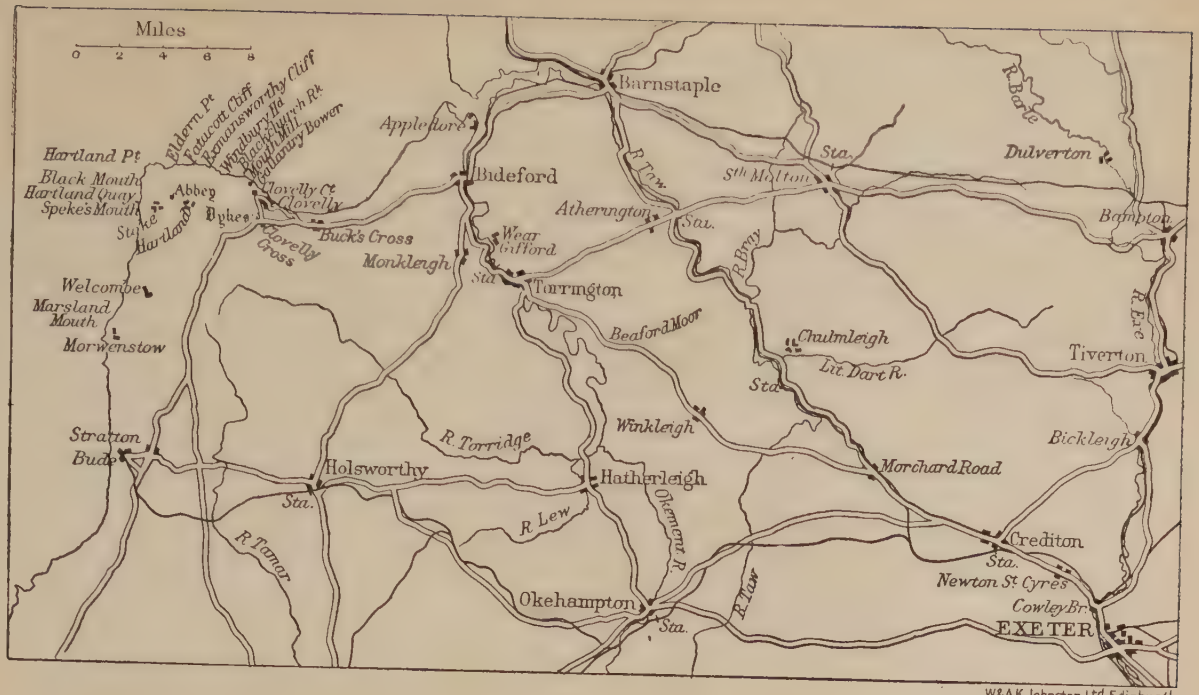
At Buck's Cross every one will imitate J. M. W. Turner, who turned aside to paint Clovelly from Buck's Mills, that strange steep isolated cove supposed, without warrant, to be inhabited entirely by Spaniards, all called Braund.

APPLEDORE HARBOUR

CHAPTER XI

CLOVELLY, WESTWARDS

JUST beyond Buck's Cross, on the high ground of which we look over the county boundary into Cornwall, there is a private drive through dense woods known as the Hobby Drive, through which, by courtesy of Mrs. Hamlyn of Clovelly Court, visitors are allowed to walk. It is, perhaps, the best way of approaching England's loveliest village. It winds gently downwards for three miles, affording glimpses through the rhododendrons and giant ferns of the great quiet bay below. The public road turns north at Clovelly Cross, where are the famous Dykes, three encampments of great antiquity covering thirty acres, from the top of which a fine view of the North Cornish and North Devon coast can be seen. We descend 700 feet to the church, which is above the village and close to the Court. It contains a Saxon font, five granite pillars, and many monuments to the Cary family, and one to Charles Kingsley, whose father was once rector here. The old Court was burnt down in 1796. The original lords were the Giffords, then came the Carys, who died out in 1724, and then the Hamlyns. Just below the house and church Clovelly proper begins. That is to say, the road ends and a cobbled narrow steep causeway with ridges every ten yards takes its place. The pannier donkeys, carrying luggage, find it easy. Mankind does not. You turn a corner and find yourself gazing down a steep toboggan slope with gabled irregular houses bending over it on either side, making a scar of white on a green hill-side.



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On the right, almost at the top is the New Inn, which is incredibly old and as full of Americans as Stratford-upon-Avon. Its dining-room is filled with old china, old oak, old brass, old everything that the ultra-modern could wish to buy. Models of a soldier and a sailor, swinging cricket bats as if they were Indian clubs, sway about in the wind above the inn. We walk into or stumble past postcard shops, tea-houses, and post

CLOVELLY—THE PATH DOWN TO HARBOUR

offices to "Temple Bar," where we pass right under a house, and face, for the first time, the quay far below; a place of donkeys, fowls, and fishing-nets, with probably an excursion-steamer just outside the jetty landing passengers in scores of tiny rowing-boats.

It is possible to bathe from the pebbly ridge, but there are no sands at Clovelly. It is a place to visit rather than to stay in, to discuss with fishermen how many herrings go to a "maise," to ponder in Crazy Kate's Cottage over a love that drove a girl mad, to spend the night at the New Inn, and wander in the darkness and at dawn up and down the then deserted ways in order really to inhale the

Clovelly—The Fish Market

Clovelly Harbour

amazing atmosphere now that you have the night-scented stock, the fuchsias, honeysuckle, hydrangeas, japonica, and rhododendrons to yourself.

Clovelly has been overphotographed. It cannot be overpraised. It bears no resemblance to any other place in the world. With its one street full of tourists you might as well not try to see it, because it is no longer there to see. Its whole virtue goes when it is full. You are bound to spend the night there unless you are one of those who imagine that to have visited a place under any conditions is to have exhausted its charm. To analyse its peculiar loveliness is not easy. Perhaps the fact that one walks out of the doorstep of one house on to the roof of the one below has something to do with it. To find yourself peering in through lattice windows into cottage bedrooms crowded with texts and china dogs may have something to do with it. Certainly the cobbles have a great deal to do with it; you may forget the bees in the flowers, the queer-shaped chimneys, the stone steps leading up to doors, even the iron ladders on the quay, but you are never allowed to forget the slippery cobbles which have the capacity of making every visitor recollect Clovelly as a "very hot place." It has the compensation of having as few motors running in its streets as Murren has.

Having climbed once more to the church, our way lies westward past Gallantry Bower, which is not a bed of roses but a 400-feet-high cliff, and across the Wilderness to Mouth Mill, a steep ravine with hills covered with trees that stretch down to the stream's edge. Here is Black Church Rock, standing nearly a hundred feet out of the water, with a vast hole like a church window in its black surface; we then climb to Windbury Head and Exmansworthy Cliff, Fatacott, and Eldern, all rugged, high, and difficult of access. It is with relief that we at last spy Hartland Point, standing 350 feet up with the white lighthouse lying at its feet like a faithful hound.

The rocks as we turn southward get more and more

curious in shape, washed as they are by the Atlantic, and by the time we reach Black Mouth we are most of us glad to turn inland for a change up the enchanting wooded valley that leads to Hartland Abbey, founded by Githa, Harold's mother, as a thank-offering to St. Nectan for saving her husband from shipwreck. It passed into the hands of Luttrells, and later of Bucks, who changed their name to Stucley. The most famous of the Stucleys was Thomas, a reckless eccentric who set out in 1563 with six ships and 300 men to colonise Florida. His attitude of familiarity with Queen Elizabeth in calling her his " own dear sister," have led some people to believe that she was. He became a pirate, a Roman Catholic, and planned a Spanish invasion of Ireland, for which he was created Duke of Ireland by the King of Spain. He was killed in 1578 fighting for the Portuguese against the Moors at Alcazar. Close to the abbey is the great granite church of St. Nectan at Stoke, with its high tower 140 feet high acting as a fine landmark to sailors. Its oak screen is as fine as that at Swimbridge. On the oak pulpit is inscribed " God save Kinge James Fines," which may not be so easy to interpret as the natives suggest.

The town of Hartland is further inland, very remote and quite unspoilt. It makes an admirable centre for rock climbers. Hartland Quay is close to St. Nectan's church, and though the sea has entirely destroyed the actual quay, leaving a sense of sombre desolation, someone has had the hardihood to erect an hotel which still stands. The contortions of the slate beds at the quay have excited generations of geologists. The cliff path southwards leads to a moorland valley, which brings one to the most unexpected view in Devon, at Speke's Mouth, where the mountain stream abruptly falls over the cliff edge to form one of the loveliest and longest waterfalls imaginable.

The cliff path leads on to Welcombe, associated with the exploits of that Danish pirate, cruel Coppinger, who, wrecked off this coast at a time when the natives knocked

Hartland Quay, Speke's Mill Waterfall

Hartland Point

on the head any witness of their wrecking, managed to mount a horse and ride in naked triumph to the house of Dinah Hamlyn, who not only sheltered but married him. He ill-treated her for several years, and then was wafted away on a mysterious ship. Clemence Dane has used his story in her play "Granite."

At Marsland Mouth, a rugged overgrown forlorn spot, Rose Salterne had her adventure with the white witch, Lucy Passmore, and walked naked into the sea at midnight at the full moon to see who her future husband would be, only to be surprised by the fugitive Jesuit traitors.

Here Devon ends, but just as every Devon man seeks to annex that part of Exmoor which is in Somerset, so does he refuse to turn back at Marsland without walking on the extra mile or two to Morwenstow, to renew acquaintance with Stephen Hawker, the poet-parson, who dressed like a fisherman and worked here from 1834 to 1875. The church is fringed with trees, "a lonely sanctuary of the Saxon days," and dedicated to St. Morwenna. It has an 800-year-old font and fine bench-ends. The chimney stacks of the vicarage were built in imitation of five church towers with which Hawker had been associated.

On the heights just above Morwenstow rise two of Devon's most famous rivers within a mile or so of each other, the Tamar, which acts as county boundary, on its southward way to Plymouth, and the Torridge, which performs a prodigious loop to the south before it is joined above Hatherleigh by its other tributaries, the Lew and the Okement, which rises at Cranmere. The exploration of these two river-heads will take us right off the beaten track across a boggy moor, and if you want to explore an unexploited Devon that hasn't altered since the days of the Carys and the Grenvilles, make a bee-line across the open highland to rejoin the lovely valley of the Torridge below Monkleigh, where Lord Chief Justice Hankford was shot accidentally by his keeper beneath Hankford Oak.

We come back to the Torridge at Wear Gifford, where an ivy-clad turreted old hall, belonging to the Fortescues, stands out nobly from the river which sweeps round it on three sides. The valley becomes more wooded and more winding until we reach Torrington, which is supposed to bear some resemblance to Jerusalem, probably because it is built on a hill. It was seized by 500 Royalists in 1642, but they were driven out by the men of Barnstaple, who were themselves dislodged by Colonel Digby, who ultimately took Barnstaple as well. In 1645 Fairfax won it finally for Parliament. Among those who have held the title of Viscount Torrington were George Monk and the father of the unfortunate Admiral Byng.

The road from here to Crediton, by way of Winkleigh, is one of the least known and most lovely in Devon. It begins by climbing out of the green valley of the Torridge on to a wild common known as Beaford Moor, which is high enough for us to see the tors of Dartmoor in front, the Cornish peaks on our right, Exmoor on our left, and the whole rich weald in between.

Winkleigh stands proudly aloof on two strongly-moated camps. Domesday allows Devon only one park, and it is placed here. In Westcote's day, " many a pretty tale was remembered here of dragons and fairies," and, as one passes on a midsummer evening, one dares swear, still is. We are completely cut off from the outer world, in the midst of rich colours with no crowd to despoil nature of her beauty. We are unlikely to meet a passer-by all the way from Torrington up to Winkleigh or down the long gentle slope from Winkleigh to Morchard Road, where we join the road connecting Barnstaple and Exeter, a forty-mile run on the flat with woods and rivers all the way, unexciting except for the church at Atherington, which contains the finest screen in the kingdom, and tombs of the Champernownes and Bassetts.

At Crediton, however, on our way into Exeter, we are brought to a stop by a fine red sandstone church. From

909 to 1050 Crediton was a bishopric, and it was here that St. Boniface or St. Winifrid, ultimately murdered in 755 by the Frisians, was born. The wide street is not old, as the town was burnt down in 1743, and again in 1769.

Close to the town on the way to Exeter is the white house of Downes, the home of Sir Redvers Buller. The last village we pass before regaining the city is Newton St. Cyres, as charming as any on our travels, being entirely composed of thatched, low, whitewashed cottages covered with fuchsias and hydrangeas.

At Cowley Bridge the broad Exe comes in from the north-east, and we are soon in the capital city, our tour through and round the richest county in England at last completed.

CREDITON CHURCH

TO THE READER.

Any reader desiring particulars as to train services and other information regarding Great Western Railway facilities, is requested to write to the Superintendent of the Line, Great Western Railway, Paddington, London, W. 2.

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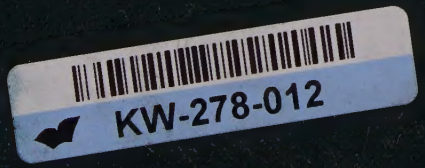
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